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JANUARY 7 & 14, 1991

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TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

Dollars for scholars

The Reuben Baker Scholarship at Harvard College is for "a resident of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, or, there being no such resident, a resident of the western part of Pennsylvania." The Borden Scholarship is for people "bearing the surname of Borden or Anderson." The Arthur Anderson Brooks Scholarship is for "deserving Protestant Christian young men . . . preferably of New England stock." The Helen E. Millington Memorial Scholarship is for "students whose fathers are deceased and whose mothers have not remarried." The Henry Harrison Sprague Scholarship is for those "in whole or in large part of New England Colonial descent." The Augustus Woodbury Scholarship is for those who "prepared for college at Phillips Exeter Academy." The list goes on for 250 pages.

The point is not that it still sometimes helps to be white. (Harvard, in practice, guarantees financial aid to all comers.) The point is that fate spews out all sorts of arbitrary advantages and disadvantages. Yet some people in government seem obsessed with one tiny category: the occasional advantage that comes from being black. Many who opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 *in* 1964, including Ronald Reagan and George Bush, now posture as guardians at the portals of its "true meaning." Who among these "reverse discrimination" obsessives believes that when all the advantages and disadvantages in the game of life are weighed and balanced, the advantage—even in 1991—goes to people of color?

Three years ago Reagan vetoed the so-called *Grove City* bill, named for the Supreme Court decision it was designed to countermand. The bill authorized federal civil rights enforcement in all departments of universities where any department accepts federal funds. Congress overrode Reagan's veto, and the Bush administration now wants to use this very law to restrict minority-targeted scholarships. Conservatives who condemned the *Grove City* bill at the time as an unwarranted government intrusion into the private sphere seem to have forgotten their objection now that the enemy is reverse discrimination rather than discrimination of the classic kind.

Bush is obviously sorry he ever wandered into this thicket. He says the original decision to ban minority scholarships "was made without the knowledge of the White House." But he cannot blame a rogue assistant secretary of education for his sorrows. The conservatives are right: Michael Williams's ruling was the logical extension of everything Bush professes to believe about civil rights, in particular the principle that it must be "colorblind" or "racially neutral." Republican operatives have been plotting to ride resentment against reverse discrimination to re-election in 1992. And minority-only scholarships are surely reverse discrimination.

By contrast there is no coherent principle or logic in the policy the administration has settled on after a few mad days of backtracking. That policy holds that universities receiving federal funds (virtually all universities) may not finance minority scholarships themselves, but may administer minority-targeted scholarships that are financed by others.

Well, it's a distinction (as my old law professor used to say). It might even thread the needle of the civil rights laws to some judge's satisfaction. But it hardly solves the moral puzzle of reverse discrimination. Bush now says that privately funded minority scholarships are not merely tolerable but actually a good thing: "I've long been committed to them." Yet how can scholarships based on race be morally repugnant when financed by universities but praiseworthy when financed by individuals?

Furthermore, the policy is not racially neutral, unless the administration is prepared to allow—if not encourage—whites-only scholarships at universities, provided they are financed by outsiders. I can't believe it is.

Even before the official backtrack, the policy was full of contradictions and violations of the alleged principle at stake. There is an exception for minority scholarships funded by the federal government itself. So, according to the Bush principles, it is the proper role of the federal government to (1) pay for minority scholarships itself; (2) ban minority scholarships paid for by universities; and (3) encourage minority scholarships paid for by private individuals. Go figure. As a final fillip, the revised version declares that the administration takes no position on minority scholarships funded by state and local governments. Probably a good thing.

Similarly, there is an exception for universities acting under a "court order to desegregate." Courts have used minority scholarships as a remedy in civil rights cases. And that's OK, apparently. Thus, according to the Bush interpretation, the same civil rights laws that sometimes *require* you to create minority scholarships at other times *forbid* you to do the exact same thing. The principle is getting a little muddy.

More generally, the administration suggests that minority scholarships may be OK even without a court order to make up for past discrimination, or simply to promote diversity in the student body. This is called reinventing the wheel. Universities don't create minority scholarships just for the heck of it, or because they hate white people. They do it to promote diversity and make up for past discrimination. If those are good enough reasons to overcome the supposed anathema on reverse discrimination, then the principle is reduced to an empty debating point.

Finally, according to the administration, there is nothing wrong with using race as "a factor" in awarding scholarships, as long as it is not the "overriding" factor. This bit of sophistry derives from Justice Lewis Powell's opinion in the 1978 *Bakke* case. Yet anything that is a factor in a decision will sometimes be the determining factor. Otherwise, it is not a factor at all.

And taking race into account as a "factor" is still reverse discrimination. What is the moral difference between, say, reserving 10 percent of all scholarships for blacks and awarding enough extra points for blackness as a "factor" under some formula system that blacks win 10 percent of all scholarships anyway? Darned if I can see. And once again, this exception is not "colorblind." The administration surely does not approve of using white skin as "a factor" in awarding scholarships. I hope.

So what's the moral? The moral, to me, is that in applying the principles of civil rights, there is no truly "colorblind" standard that any reasonable person, including George Bush, would actually be willing to enforce. It is possible to stir up white resentment against reverse discrimination. It is possible to recognize that reverse discrimination is dangerous medicine that should be used sparingly. It is not possible to get all self-righteous about "colorblindness" as an absolute principle, and really mean it. The choice is either to abandon the laws protecting blacks and other minorities, or to recognize that they can't always be applied equally in both directions.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Duty free

To the editors:

In an appalling editorial reminiscent of its support for contra aid several years ago, TNR enthusiastically supports "a carefully calibrated war ... avoiding civilian targets and eschewing excess" against Saddam Hussein ("Tough Duty," December 10). Are you so deluded and feverish as to believe such an oxymoronic fantasy is possible? Has the failed scientific, calculated Pentagon war of Robert McNamara been forgotten?

Robert Tucker, like Senator Sam Nunn, persuasively argues that sanctions and containment will protect *our* policy interests in the region ("Why War?" December 10). War is necessary only to eliminate Saddam for the benefit of his adversaries: Iran, Israel, Kuwait, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. Not surprisingly, all of these countries exhort us to sacrifice Americans to do so.

One can almost perversely laugh at the willingness of TNR's elitist, inside-the-Beltway editors to send the much poorer, much darker all-volunteer Army into battle as a way of proving their foreign policy masculinity. But any laughter will abruptly end when we are subjected to around-the-clock deliveries of body bags.

RICHARD ESTES
Davis, California

Election daze

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg and I, along with forty-five others, traveled to Guatemala as part of a delegation sponsored by the Guatemalan business development foundation FUNDESA to observe the country's November 11 elections. The only election-related fraud that I witnessed was Mr. Weisberg's Guatemala Diarist ("Poll Hacks," December 10).

During the evening of election day, Louisiana Representative Bob Livingston, the senior member of our delegation, chaired a meeting to determine the delegation's initial observations. Although some members of the delegation observed various technical problems, no observer reported any activities that would have cast a shadow of impropriety or illegitimacy upon the election.

After concluding the meeting, Mr. Livingston, four other observers, and I began drafting a statement. Mr. Weisberg expressed his opinion that the statement should allude to allegations he had heard of vote buying, but he possessed no evidence to substantiate this. Mr. Livingston, a veteran observer of international elections (including several in Central America), expressed his opinion that citing unsubstantiated allegations of vote buying could affect the international reputation of Guatemala. The remaining observers supported Mr. Livingston's position.

Mr. Weisberg implies that the majority of our delegation was dishonest or ignorant of the truth because many of us are Republicans. He even wrote, "Had the election been largely unfair and unfree, I doubt we would have been the first to point it out." But the fact is, the elections in Guatemala were free and fair. To have indicated otherwise or to have focused attention on unsubstantiated allegations would have been irresponsible and a disservice to the democratic process in Guatemala.

Mr. Weisberg implies that prior to the trip FUNDESA misrepresented itself to the entire delegation. According to him, it was not until we arrived in Guatemala that "we learned that FUNDESA was really a group of businessmen seeking to promote investment and tourism by fostering a more favorable image of Guatemala." Every observer I spoke to had investigated FUNDESA before accepting their invitation to observe the elections. As far as I can determine, ace reporter Weisberg was the only one who did not do his homework.

PAUL MORRELL
Washington, D.C.

The writer is chief of staff to U.S. Representative Robert Dornan.

To the editors:

We may not be up to Jacob Weisberg's standards, but we had thought ourselves lonesome liberals in his Guatemala Diarist. We counted six, not three, plus as many academic centrists among the forty-seven observers. FUNDESA, with our help, scoured the streets for liberals. Conservatives lapped up the invitation; most liberals couldn't come—our problem. In any case, our group's accurate and balanced press release was a nonpartisan affair.

FUNDESA also deserves congratulations for their probity and for granting untrammeled access to the polls to the several international observer groups, whose presence was understood to deter fraud.

The larger difficulty with Mr. Weisberg's article, however, is that American observers got too much attention and Guatemala too little. Death took an election holiday, but soon a military unit was murdering Indians in the tracks of the poll watchers. For democracy, honest elections are essential but not sufficient; the most important briefings were not from exhausted candidates, but from the independent Human Rights Ombudsman and the Reconciliation Commission, sponsors of face-to-face talks between elite and insurgents. The next president needs to assert real civilian control over the military, curb official violence, and negotiate a peace.

FRANCIS J. MCNEIL
BARRY SKLAR
Washington, D.C.

Mr. McNeil served as ambassador to Costa Rica from 1980 to 1983. Mr. Sklar is a staff member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Jacob Weisberg replies:

I don't say that Republicans aren't qualified to observe elections, only that a delegation underwritten by U.S. taxpayers should be more expert and less partisan than ours was. I do not believe that any serious effort was made to achieve a political balance.

On the question of vote buying, as I told Representative Livingston, there was no way that any of us could have obtained hard evidence. What I heard were credible reports that vote buying was taking place in a number of towns. I never claimed that this invalidated or delegitimized the election. I just didn't think we should declare the elections free and fair two hours before the polls closed without mentioning the allegations.

I did check out FUNDESA beforehand. What I was not prepared for was the extent to which our hosts—hard-working and pleasant though they certainly were—would direct us toward a favorable verdict on the election.

Misfires

To the editors:

A few corrections regarding the reference to my *New York Times* review of Shelby Steele's book *The Content of Our Character* in Juan Williams's "The Fire This Time" (December 10).

1. I do not "mock" the values of education, hard work, and family. I do take issue with Mr. Steele's romanticized propertizing of these as exclusively middle-class values.

2. I do not romanticize the lives of poor people. I do abhor Mr. Steele's explicit and blanket demonization of "the lower class."

3. I do not criticize Mr. Steele for employing psychological models per se. I continue to be concerned, as Mr. Williams himself professes to be, that Mr. Steele's emphatic reliance upon psychology as the *sole* explanation of racial disadvantage is not only ahistorical, but, as I have said, in-

continued on page 49

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

COLOR-BLINDED

The latest botch in what passes for the Bush administration's domestic policy agenda is the controversy over racially based scholarships for minority college students. It started when an official at the Department of Education declared that minority-only scholarships (like whites-only scholarships) were illegal under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. When civil rights and higher education groups raised a fuss, the White House panicked and chief of staff John Sununu enforced a partial reversal of policy. The result is a compromise that splits the difference between a commendably idealistic desire to adhere to colorblind principles and a commendably practical desire to help black kids get an important middle-class credential. But the issue of racial quotas remains unresolved, and, worse, has been made riper for exploitation by Jesse Helms, David Duke, and other political bottom-feeders.

The best that can be said for George Bush where race is concerned is that his administration seems to have better intentions than his predecessor's did. This is true in spite of the fact that Mr. Bush was elected partly on the strength of a famously inflammatory television commercial, the one featuring a black convict who committed rape while out of jail under a furlough program administered (though not originated) by Mr. Bush's opponent. In office, however, Mr. Bush has appointed black men and women to high positions, has met with civil rights leaders, has avoided appeals to racial prejudice, and has even made a few faltering gestures toward attracting black support for the Republican Party. Last year he made an apparently good-faith effort to compromise with Democrats on a civil rights bill that would have encouraged businesses to practice affirmative action in hiring minorities without using numerical quotas. Believing quotas were inherent in the bill Congress passed, Mr. Bush vetoed it.

The current flap has its genesis in another arena of racial politics: Arizona, which is being boycotted on account of its rejection of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday. The annual Fiesta Bowl football game is played in that state, and its sponsors, looking for a way to be exempt from the boycott, asked the Department of Education if they could establish $100,000 scholarship funds for minority students at the participating universities. Michael Williams, the head of the department's Office of Civil Rights, said no, arguing that colleges receiving federal funds are prohibited from "denying, restricting, or providing different or segregated financial aid . . . on the basis of race, color, or national origin." He urged the scholarship fund to switch "from a race-exclusive program to a program in which race is considered a positive factor among similarly qualified individuals, or a program that utilizes race-neutral criteria," such as financial need.

Mr. Williams's decision made front-page news, coming as it did amid the continuing debate over the civil rights bill veto and over whether Republicans should make racial quotas a major issue in the 1992 election cycle. It had particular salience because Mr. Williams's "background," as the president put it, shows him to be "an extraordinarily sensitive, very intelligent person"—which, translated from the Bushese, means that Mr. Williams is black. (Mr. Williams is also a former Justice Department investigator of hate crimes in the South.) Civil rights and higher education groups swiftly alleged that the ruling was a major reversal of federal policy and was likely to decimate education opportunities for minority students. In fact, according to Mr. Williams, except during 1981 and 1982, when the Education Department approved racially exclusive

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scholarships, the department has consistently prescribed need-based rather than race-based scholarship policies since 1979.

It's hard to argue that a scholarship restricted to blacks can be acceptable if a scholarship restricted to whites is not. On the other hand, as TRB argues in this week's column, university catalogs are full of scholarships based on inherited characteristics unrelated to the merit of the recipients—such as scholarships for children of alumni, or for people from Alaska or Guam, or for the offspring of fire fighters.

On the most abstract level of moral reasoning, there is no real difference between these distinctions and racial ones. But because race is the most dangerous divide in American society, any sort of discrimination on the basis of race carries the potential for damage to the social fabric. America's ugly history of negative discrimination, which is the most powerful argument in favor of "reverse" or "positive" discrimination, is also the most powerful argument against it.

The controversy is not only about abstract principles but also about practical public policy, and as such it ought to be informed by empirical facts. Unfortunately, no one—not Mr. Williams and not his critics—seems to have accurate statistics on how many minority students actually attend college on scholarships granted solely on the basis of race or ethnicity. It is clear that some do. At Penn State, under a program still in effect but about to be modified, all minority students who earn a 2.5 grade-point average receive $620 a year, and all who earn a 2.75 average get $1,240, regardless of need. Whites, regardless of need, receive no such bonus. Harvard does not give race-based undergraduate scholarships, but does provide full tuition, room, and board to minority graduate students, regardless of need. Columbia has a $25 million scholarship fund established by the Kluge Foundation exclusively for minorities, though the university says that no needy student is denied aid.

But it is not clear that any of these students would lose their educational opportunity if purely race-based scholarships were abolished. And it is clear that blacks and Hispanics would continue to be the major beneficiaries of scholarships awarded primarily on the basis of need. Recognizing this, some make a different argument. Richard Rosser, president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, contends that race-based scholarships are a university's way of saying to minorities, "You are valued. We want you." But surely there are ways of saying that without restricting scholarships to specific races.

When complaints about Mr. Williams's ruling started mounting—NAACP director Benjamin Hooks, for instance, said it was "insensitive, callous, and illogical"—the White House went into a series of hasty huddles. The president, preoccupied with the Gulf, apparently told Mr. Sununu to get the political heat turned down. White House political and domestic policy staffers advised a fast reversal of Mr. Williams's decision; White House counsel

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Boyden Gray urged that it be confirmed. Mr. Sununu ultimately ordered the compromise whereby private persons or entities may endow race-based scholarship funds, but private universities receiving federal funds may not use their own money to give scholarships solely on the basis of race, nor may state and local institutions. A four-year transition period will permit universities to review and realign their policies.

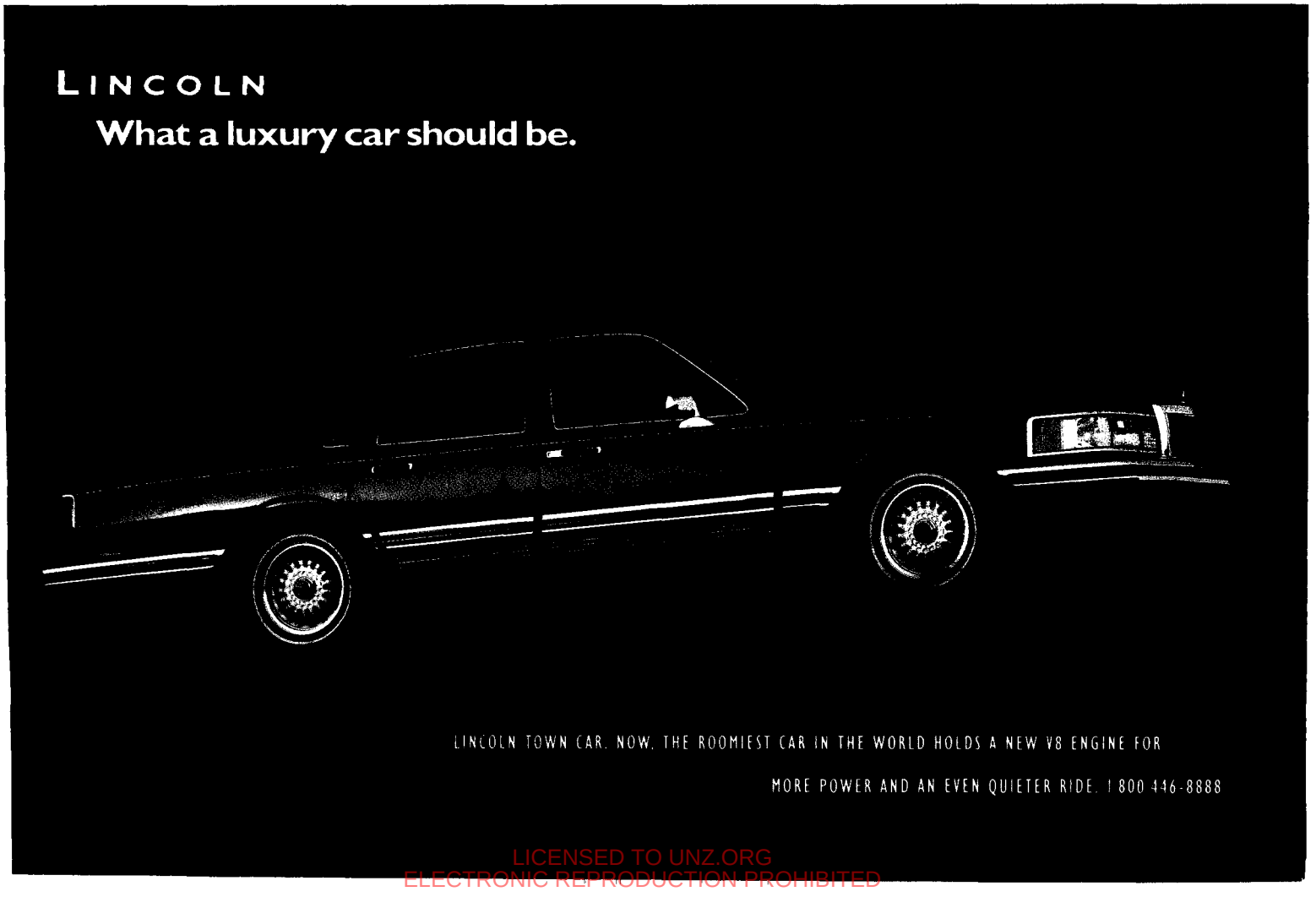
This fudge is not the worst possible outcome, but neither is it the best. The best would be an expansion of federally funded scholarship aid to allow more needy students, regardless of race, to get an education. In practice, this would do at least as much to encourage and support a minority presence at our colleges and universities as racially based scholarships. It would have the added advantage of not provoking the resentment that racial discrimination, whatever its goal, inevitably arouses.

The controversy over race-based scholarships is of a familiar kind: in a recessionary climate, people increasingly divide themselves into racial and ethnic teams to fight over dwindling economic and social goods. What is needed is not ever more exquisitely calibrated measurements of racial and ethnic entitlement. What is needed is the will to make the whole society both richer and more equitable.

We need racial diversity on our campuses, just as we need a diversity of religions, political creeds, artistic talents, and intellectual inclinations. But the encouragement of that diversity should be conditioned by merit and by need, not by racial exclusivity. It should also be attuned to the political climate in which it must operate. Mr. Bush's compromise is the work of practical politicians, not principled intellectuals. It has not settled the issue; it has ducked the intellectual arguments and, predictably, galvanized debate rather than quelling it. It's a relief, perhaps, that the fudge implies a reluctance to exploit race for political gain in 1992. But the partial climb-down will allow others to take up that ugly agenda. The Dukes and the Helmses have been presented with another chance to assert that the Washington establishment is attached to racial quotas at the expense of recession-hit whites. And the real issues in higher education—its staggering cost, its falling standards—remain blithely ignored. In that, at least, the Bush administration remains constant. ●

NOTEBOOK

INTERESTED PARTY: Last week the Republican National Committee offered William Bennett, the former drug czar, $300,000 a year to become its chairman, more than double the usual salary. Even a lawyer might see that as pretty good money, let alone an ex-academic like Mr. Bennett. But Mr. Bennett, saying that he "didn't take a vow of poverty," declined the offer as sarcastical-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ly as a teenage crack runner spurning a minimum-wage job at McDonald's. The former drug czar reckons he can rake in twenty grand a night making speeches to trade and industry groups. Let's see ... figuring three speeches a week, with a two-week vacation, that's $3 million per annum. All *right.* Maybe the congressional Democrats should rename their proposal for a surtax on incomes over $1 million the William Bennett Revenue Enhancement Act.

WEARING THIN: On Sundays *The New York Times* runs a page of photos of what fashionable people are wearing "On the Street." During the holidays it also attempts to prick the social conscience of its readers with the "Neediest Cases" fund drive. On December 16 the two features collided: the fashion page featured a photo of a woman in a Jean-Charles de Castelbajac coat dropping a coin into a blind beggar's cup. According to the commentary, "These cover-ups provide not only warmth to their wearers but also a touch of much-needed color to cold city streets." Next week: designer homeless people sporting sections of *The New York Times.* ●

The Democrats and the Gulf.

THE WIMP FACTOR

By Fred Barnes

On November 8 something happened to the nation's leading Democrats. For weeks they'd sounded tough, interventionist, and nationalistic on the subject of curbing Saddam Hussein. Then suddenly Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia turned dovish. Governor Mario Cuomo of New York talked up a peace settlement in which Saddam Hussein would get land and oil. Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee quibbled with President Bush's assertion that Iraq would soon have a nuclear weapon. Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts urged Bush "to give peace a chance." Governor Bill Clinton of Arkansas preached caution. House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri pleaded for "sufficient time" for economic sanctions to force Iraq out of Kuwait. He didn't say how long.

Here's what happened on November 8: Democrats came face-to-face with the prospect of using military force. President Bush announced that day he was doubling the number of American troops deployed in Saudi Arabia against Saddam Hussein. What's more, he said this would give the United States "an adequate offensive military option." Bush had crossed a threshold. Not only was he willing to deploy American force; now he was willing to use it. Democrats aren't. They collectively said to Bush, "Whoa."

There's an old pattern at work here. Democrats, especially those with presidential ambitions, regularly flinch at the use of force. They may be right in some instances, but they're killing themselves politically. They come across as weak and indecisive—not the traits Americans desire in a president. Long after the confrontation is over, the residue of Democratic weakness remains. The result: Democrats can't win the White House.

Americans seek something unique when they vote for president. In elections for local, state, and congressional offices, they want services, money, etc. Democratic candidates do well. But in presidential races, the nation's security—the national issue—is foremost. Americans want a credible commander in chief in the White House, an assertive, national leader who is, among other things, willing to use force if necessary. Democratic candidates have lost five of the last six presidential elections at least partly because of the national issue. In fact, liberal and social democratic parties that turned soft on the national issue have lost nearly everywhere in recent years—in Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, Canada.

Democrats aren't credible as commanders in chief. In 1983 six of the seven Democratic presidential candidates criticized President Reagan for invading Grenada. They endorsed the nuclear freeze, and bickered over who'd backed it first. Not surprisingly, Reagan had the national issue all to himself and won easily. OK, that wasn't the only reason he won. But it helped enormously. In 1988 Dukakis was critical of Republican interventionism and emphasis on military strength. When Dukakis rode in a tank, Bush's media consultant, Roger Ailes, seized on that in a devastating TV ad. The point of the thirty-second spot, Ailes says, was that "you couldn't imagine him as commander in chief."

Polls are often misleading on the national issue. The nuclear freeze, which Reagan opposed, was overwhelmingly popular. Reagan's disdain for arms control talks with the Soviets was unpopular. Yet when voters assessed Reagan, the whole was greater than the sum of the parts. Voters may have thought him wrong on an issue or two, but they liked the full package, a president aggressively protecting the national security. In 1988 Bush was zinged for supporting aid to the contras, a policy disliked by a solid majority of Americans. But what they didn't like was the contras themselves. They had little problem with a leader willing to confront the national issue in Central America.

Now Democrats are again being led astray by polls. Backing for Bush's policy dipped after November 8, when he appeared more likely to use force. Democrats pounced. Maybe they'll get short-term political gain from this. Long-term, it's disastrous. Unless there's a long war with thousands of American casualties, Bush is bound to come out ahead politically. "If Saddam Hus-

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sein leaves Kuwait head first or foot first, George Bush wins," says Ailes. "I think the Democrats have mishandled this thing."

None more than Nunn. Among nationally known Democrats, Nunn had the best reputation for strength in foreign policy and willingness to use force. Democratic Representative John Murtha of Pennsylvania, chairman of the House military appropriations subcommittee, says Nunn has lost credibility by opposing the Bush buildup. He's sacrificed his biggest asset, his cool hawkishness. Nunn is careful to say he's not against using force at some point, just not now. (He won't say when.) But he's also for cutting the number of troops in Saudi Arabia. He stacked hearings of the Senate Armed Services Committee in favor of doves. He barked at Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, "If we have a war, we're never going to know whether [sanctions] would have worked, are we? That's the major point here." My guess is that won't be a major point in 1992. But if Nunn runs for president, his skittishness about using force will be.

Gephardt echoes Nunn. "Simply put, many of us support a policy of patient strength, staying the course, and permitting the sanctions to work," he said in a November 28 speech. Cuomo, in an appearance in Los Angeles on November 19, said, "You could negotiate something that gets them [Iraq] out of Kuwait for the most part, leaves them maybe a little bit of water, leaves them a little bit of oil, and then puts in a United Nations task force to go over the whole question of chemical weapons . . . and this movement toward nuclear capacity." Cuomo later insisted he wasn't actually proposing it, but he did say it. Kennedy, meanwhile, said on "Meet the Press" on December 2, "I believe we can avoid war, and I think it's important that we do avoid war." Asked if he'd back the use of force at some point, Kennedy dodged the question.

However you slice it, Democrats ceded the national issue to Bush. He could blow it, but he's told aides that he has no intention of allowing the Kuwait issue to linger, unresolved. If sanctions dragged on for twelve to eighteen months, Bush would lose face, popularity, and re-electability. He knows this. Either Saddam Hussein pulls out by January 15, Bush says, or he'll be forced out. As to what Democrats think or say about this, Bush's attitude is, who cares?

Only a handful of Democrats are worried about the party's anti-war posture. Representative Vic Fazio of California frets that "Democrats may be seen as the party of peace-but-no-strength." House Armed Services Committee hearings conducted by Representative Les Aspin of Wisconsin countered Nunn's. Representative Stephen Solarz of New York argued the case for war, if necessary, before the Democratic caucus and the moderate Democratic Leadership Council. (See "The Stakes in the Gulf," page 18.) If Bush triumphs over Saddam, without Democratic backing, Solarz said, then voters "will keep us out of the White House forever." My point exactly. ●

George Bush and Teddy Roosevelt.

BULL MOUSE

By Sidney Blumenthal

Not once in his long presidential campaign did George Bush ever mention Theodore Roosevelt. Yet Bush as president set out immediately to refurbish the White House with touchstones of T.R. In the Cabinet Room he took down the portrait of Calvin Coolidge that Ronald Reagan had hung there and replaced it with a picture of the Republican Roosevelt. And in the Oval Office itself, Bush strategically placed not one but two sculptures of his new hero—as if to suggest the two roles through which Roosevelt so skillfully defined his glittering public career: the dude and the Rough Rider.

In his own muddled way, Bush has tried to use the same two images to define himself. The resulting tension has been apparent ever since he was first drawn into Texas politics by Republican moderates trying to repel a far-right invasion of the Houston party organization. He has appeared uncomfortable both as the gentleman and as the warrior, often underreacting or overreacting in consecutive compensation. His struggle to reconcile the roles has been a central drama of his political personality.

In May Bush arranged a formal White House lecture on Roosevelt by David McCullough, author of *Mornings on Horseback*, a captivating account of the asthmatic boy who willed himself to become the embodiment of American energy. The president invited much of his senior staff, his Cabinet, and the leadership of Congress. Mounted on the wall, looming above the distinguished audience, were two paintings: the huge John Singer Sargent portrait of President Theodore Roosevelt, the quintessential Eastern dude in three-piece suit and pince-nez; and a rendering of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt in his uniform as commander of the Rough Riders, the hero on horseback of the Spanish-American War. Bush introduced the historian with remarks that had obvious autobiographical resonance. "With his love of big game hunting, he'd be drummed out of the Audubon Society," Bush joked about Roosevelt. And: "He came out of the establishment." But "by moving west," he "broke out" of a "life of privilege."

"Cowboy, patrician, philanthropist, Nobel laureate, social reformer, author, president of the United States," McCullough intoned. For nearly an hour Bush, sitting in the front row, listened raptly to anecdotes about the most notable athlete-cum-intellectual ever to hold his office. On T.R. among the cowboys of the Badlands, McCullough observed: "He never tried to be like

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them. He never tried to be other than what he was." And yet he was accepted, and he recruited many of them to follow him in the charge up San Juan Hill. "Mrs. Bush was just ecstatic after it was over," says McCullough. "They wrote me the most complimentary letters I guess I've ever received."

After the lecture the congressional leaders followed the president up to the living quarters, where they launched into the negotiations that led first to his casting aside his campaign promise not to raise taxes and then to extended dithering. By late July his popularity was plummeting. Then, on August 2, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. Bush seized upon this as the defining crisis of his presidency, a test of his mettle both as dude and as Rough Rider.

After an initial moment of indecisiveness, Bush took command. Endless waves of troops were sent forth; endless telephone calls to foreign leaders were made; endless deals were cut by his hunting companion and secretary of state, James Baker. Bush appeared as the consummate internationalist, neatly stitching together his European-Arab coalition. He showed himself to be a practitioner of an utterly unsentimental realpolitik by enlisting Hafez Assad, the Syrian terrorist-dictator (no different in kind from Saddam Hussein), on his side. Winning the approval of the United Nations (which he had scorned during his campaign) was the crowning touch, bringing Bush out from the shadow of Reagan, who had reveled in going it alone.

T.R.'s most famous aphorism, "Speak softly and carry a big stick," can be understood as a pithy formula for melding the two roles. Bush has picked up the stick, but he has spoken shrilly—and incoherently. He has been given to excessive flights of hyperbole, importing the analogies of World War II and the cold war into the Persian Gulf along with the tanks: Hussein is worse than Hitler, Kuwait is Czechoslovakia, the Arab coalition should be NATO. In spite of his grandiose rhetoric, Bush has done little to rally the people; he barely claimed credit for the release of the hostages. Instead, he has buried himself in a crisis management bunker from which he has issued ever shifting terms of victory: Kuwait must be liberated, Iraq must be stopped from developing a nuclear bomb, Hussein must be brought before a war crimes tribunal. The list of aims he has enumerated is so long that only if Hussein is obliterated will it be satisfied. Bush has raised expectations and fears that he may not truly want to meet, if meeting them means a protracted, bloody war. If he is swept away in a messianic crusade to an unknown destiny, it will be because he failed to limit his objectives and commitments from the start.

GEORGE BUSH BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Theodore Roosevelt's credo in international relations, he once said, was "realizable ideals." He demonstrated more mastery in his balance of realism and idealism, power and morality than any president since John Quincy Adams. T.R. adhered to the code of the gentleman in the jungle of foreign policy. He understood both power and power's limits. He glorified war and the manly virtues, but condemned the "prize jingo fools" and warhawks with a vehemence equal to that he leveled against pacifists. He sent the Great White Fleet around the globe in a display of might but was the only president to win the Nobel Peace Prize. He was an imperialist who vastly expanded American influence but should be recognized for "the regularity with which he restricted American overseas commitments," according to Frederick W. Marks III, in his aptly titled study *Velvet on Iron: The Diplomacy of Theodore Roosevelt.* It's true that when World War I broke out and T.R. realized he would have to spend it as a bystander, he became a delirious, destructive political force. But as president he was very far from being the saber-rattling psycho who charged up the staircase in *Arsenic and Old Lace.*

For three generations afterward, the mandarins of American foreign policy claimed a line of descent from Roosevelt. The establishment of an elite that prized both brains and virility was a legacy he had intended.

continued on page 16

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In Search of Cures for California's Growing Pains

California. The very name conjures up gold rushes and endless summers. But the California dream has a dark side. Air pollution. Clogged highways. Housing shortages. The side effects of rampant growth.

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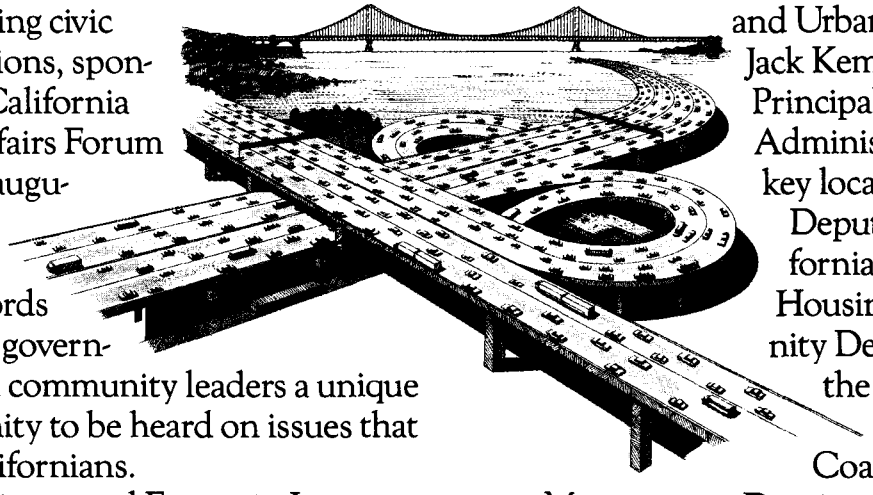

At the inaugural Forum in Los Angeles, futurist Alvin Toffler addressed California's transportation crisis. The Forum was repeated in San Francisco a week later.

In 1989 the Forum returned by popular demand in an expanded format. On November 2 the Forum convened in San Francisco to address the growing imbalance between jobs and housing in the San Francisco Bay Area. A week later in Los Angeles the Forum's subject was how to strike a balance between economic growth and air quality. Both events attracted some 200 state and local officials and business leaders even in the aftermath of the region's biggest earthquake in nearly a century.

Such attendance is hardly surprising with nationally noted speakers like U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp, The EPA's Principal Assistant Administrator and such key local officials as the Deputy Director of California's Department of Housing and Community Development and the Executive Director of the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

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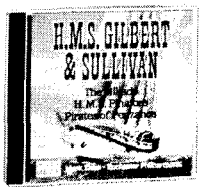

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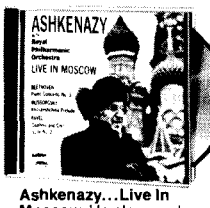

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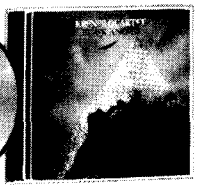

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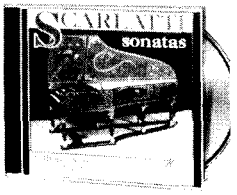

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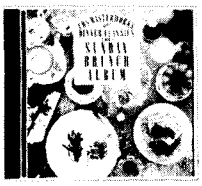

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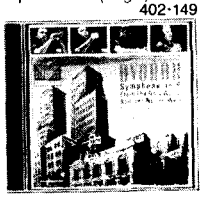

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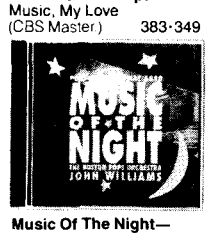

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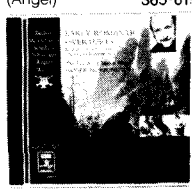

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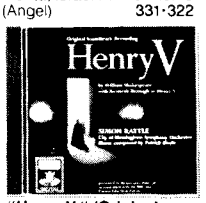

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The lineage ran from T.R. to T.R.'s protégé Henry Stimson, who became Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of war, to Stimson's deputy Harvey Bundy, to Harvey Bundy's son McGeorge Bundy, John F. Kennedy's national security adviser. Where does Bush fit?

The coincidence of the Gulf crisis and the publication of Godfrey Hodgson's biography of Stimson, *The Colonel* (see "The Stimsonian Institution" by Ronald Steel, page 44), has led some to see Bush in a Stimsonian, and therefore Rooseveltian, light. *Newsweek*'s Evan Thomas, co-author of *The Wise Men*, writes that Bush "represents everything the old foreign policy establishment stood for" and "sounds exactly like the Col. Stimson of Hodgson's biography." Stimson—who gave a speech at Andover heard by the 16-year-old George, and who was present at a Skull and Bones ceremony attended by the future president—was the youthful Bush's hero.

But the best and the brightest of the Vietnam era were the last incarnation of the Rooseveltian elite. What followed from Vietnam was the rise of a Republicanism that made it necessary for Bush to repudiate that of his patrician forebears. Bush has the residual affect of his class, but his true line of descent is through his greatest political patron, Richard Nixon. Stimson had nothing but contempt for the denigrative method that challenged the legitimacy of one's opponents, the method wellhoned by Nixon and reflexively employed by Bush. It is not difficult to imagine what the upright Stimson would have thought of Roger Ailes and John Sununu.

Bush's closeness to Nixon is pertinent now, for it is marked in his expansive view of the executive's warmaking power. Bush's deep suspicion of Congress in matters of foreign policy is ingrained from the Nixon years. It was predictable that there would be a backlash. Bush failed to consult Congress before announcing, two days after the midterm election, his decision to double the number of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia. This prompted two weeks of Senate hearings, which crystallized public queasiness about a war and which rallied much of the public behind the notion that sanctions would work. The latter was Bush's previous position, which he was now arguing against. His strategic murkiness and political arrogance had drawn Congress into the vacuum. He had limited the ambit of his power by acting as if it were unbounded. This was neither Rooseveltian nor Stimsonian, but Nixonian.

Just as Theodore Roosevelt was both gentleman and warrior without strain, his policies foreign and domestic were one. His vision of national greatness was comprehensive; and in this, perhaps, lies his greatest dissimilarity to George Bush. T.R. saw himself as personifying the capacity of the country for change. He fiercely believed that only by leading reform could he stand as the avatar of a rising power launching a new century. The Rough Rider's greatest battle was against the "timid" Republican conservatives he denounced as "the party of privilege." His belief in manly virtues was not simply for export.

John Hay, who had been Lincoln's personal secretary, was first William McKinley's and then Theodore Roosevelt's secretary of state. In his eulogy for the assassinated McKinley, which also was an invocation of the coming age, Hay spoke intoxicating words that broke through the primal prohibitions against hubris: "The 'debtor nation' has become the chief creditor nation. The financial center of the world, which required thousands of years to journey from the Euphrates to the Thames and the Seine, seems passing to the Hudson between daybreak and dark. . . . The fathers are dead; the prophets are silent; the questions are new, and have no answer but in time. . . . The past gives no clue to the future. The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever? We are ourselves the fathers! We are ourselves the prophets!"

Ninety years later George Bush closes the century that Theodore Roosevelt opened. The creditor nation is now the debtor nation; the sun seems to be setting on the Hudson and rising over Tokyo Bay; the executive deals in polls, not prophecy. In McCullough's White House lecture, he read aloud a cautionary statement in which T.R. had envisaged an American ruin. "The things that will destroy America," Roosevelt had said, "are prosperity at any price, safety first instead of duty first, a love of soft living and the get-rich-quick theory of life. This country will not be a permanently good place for any of us to live unless we make it a reasonably good place for all of us to live. Americanism is a question of spirit and conviction and purpose, not of creed or birthplace."

McCullough's talk was taped for future broadcast by the public television station in Rochester, New York. In the program Bush is interviewed about T.R. His thoughts inadvertently serve as a sharp counterpoint, for he echoes the Old Guard sentiments of William Howard Taft, the Skull and Bones man who succeeded Roosevelt, and whom Roosevelt helped bring down in the 1912 Bull Moose campaign. "It's a different time," Bush said woodenly, "much more security, many more constraints on a president." The fathers are dead, the prophets are silent. ●

ON THE HILL

SHADOW BOXING

By Jacob Weisberg

When Congress reconvenes on the morning of January 3, 1991, District of Columbia Shadow Senator Jesse Jackson will most likely be somewhere in the precincts of the Capitol. He will not, however, be standing on the Senate floor, or sitting in the Speaker's lobby, or napping in the

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Democratic cloakroom. After the new senators are sworn in, he will probably give a statement or hold a press conference. But it won't be from the Senate TV studio, because he won't be allowed to use it. Afterward he won't go to his office. He won't have an office.

When Jackson decided to seek the position of shadow senator earlier this year, he hoped that he might be seated, given an office and committee assignments, even invited to join debates on the floor. He now knows that none of this is likely to come to pass. Jackson met with the majority leader, Senator George Mitchell of Maine, before he was elected. Mitchell, according to Rainbow Coalition statehood coordinator Frank Watkins, "indicated his support for statehood" and told Jackson he would direct his staff to study the precedents for how to treat shadow legislators. Mitchell declines to comment on the issue, but according to Senate and party sources, he will tell Jackson when they next meet that there isn't much he can do for him. Any special indulgence or access would require approval from the Senate Rules Committee, a jealous guardian of tradition and protocol in the upper chamber. Charles Robb of Virginia, a statehood supporter, said: "I don't think there will be any move to treat him as anyone other than a professional lobbyist for a constituency."

Jackson's crusade was dealt another setback when financing for it was blocked. Following the example of others territories that petitioned for statehood, D.C. held a public referendum in 1980, which mandated elections for three shadow positions, two senators and a representative. Jackson persuaded the D.C. City Council finally to hold the elections this year after they had been postponed five times. The council declined, however, to appropriate funds to pay for staff salaries or expenses. Congress added insult to injury by forbidding the city to spend its own money on the lobbying effort. Jackson hoped to solve the problem by raising private funds. But according to an opinion issued by the General Accounting Office, he cannot even do that: private money donated to the effort automatically becomes public money, and therefore cannot be spent to promote statehood. Jackson says he will file a lawsuit challenging the GAO opinion. If it fails, he and shadow colleague Florence H. Pendleton won't even be able to rent office space on South Capitol Street.

When I interviewed Jackson after a recent press conference he held to protest the Department of Education's ruling against minority scholarships, he said that the perks and privileges of Senate membership were not the issue he cared about. "The press has spent a lot of time focusing on the bathrooms and the gymnasiums," he said. "This is about sovereignty. If we can fight to restore sovereignty in occupied Kuwait, if we can fight for sovereignty in occupied Eastern Europe, we can fight for sovereignty in occupied Washington."

Hyperbole aside, he is wise to frame the issue in terms of justice for the disfranchised voters of Washington rather than as a question of goodies for Jesse Jackson. If his campaign is viewed as an attempt to endow a position for himself in the Senate, it will generate little public sympathy, inside the District or out. But if Jackson casts the issue as one of fundamental fairness and equal rights (which it is), it may eventually gain momentum. The 1988 Democratic platform endorsed statehood for the District. The entire party leadership in both houses, except for Dan Rostenkowski of Illinois, is on record in support of it. The trick will be to make the Democrats pursue D.C. statehood in practice. Jackson needs to find a way to hold the party's feet to the fire.

According to Mark Plotkin, a political analyst at WAMU, the National Public Radio affiliate in Washington, Jackson's tenure will be judged by whether there's a vote on statehood; Washington can join the union by winning a simple majority in both houses. "Jackson feels that whatever he does in D.C., people will always vote for him," says Plotkin. "He'll be surprised with how angry people will be at the end of his term if the issue is no farther advanced than when he started."

Former Rainbow Coalition general counsel Jamin Raskin, a law professor at American University, believes that Jackson needs to apply pressure at two levels: "street heat" on the one hand, and an "elite strategy of negotiating with the establishment" on the other. Both tactics are problematic, however. The Rainbow Coalition is planning a mass mobilization for January 19, during the Martin Luther King holiday weekend, and has promised civil disobedience and a vigil in front of the White House. But as the histories of Operation PUSH and the Rainbow Coalition demonstrate, organizing is not Jackson's strong suit. A sparse turnout will indicate that he is no more serious about statehood than he is about the boycott of Nike sneakers he recently got excited over, then lost interest in. More important, it will show that District residents themselves remain apathetic about their status. "He needs a big crowd," says one source close to Jackson. "He should be getting in touch with his 500 favorite ministers right now."

The other arm of the strategy poses an even greater hazard. Jackson can present the party with a strong moral case and a strong ulterior motive: statehood for D.C. would mean two more Democrats in the Senate, in perpetuity. But Jackson's own presence may prove counterproductive. If he spends much time walking the Senate corridors, it won't be lost on his would-be colleagues that the first senator from "New Columbia" would be Jackson himself. The issue of statehood will conflate with the issue of Jesse. Democrats remain sensitive to the perception that they are knuckling under to Jackson's demands for better working conditions.

Jackson does have some allies in his fight. Senators Paul Simon of Illinois, Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, Al Gore of Tennessee, Robb of Virginia, and the newly elected Paul Wellstone of Minnesota all back his crusade. Kennedy has introduced statehood bills in the

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last two sessions. But not one of these legislators has yet emerged as the vigorous champion the cause needs. "For a variety of reasons I think the time is not yet optimum for considering statehood," Robb says. If this is what his allies think, Jackson will need greater reserves of patience and diligence than he has demonstrated in past endeavors.

His time and credibility are running out. When Jackson decided not to run for mayor of D.C. in 1989, most recognized he wasn't up to a job that required extended commitment. "Jesse don't want to run nothing but his mouth," as Marion Barry succinctly put it. Jackson answered that he didn't want to preside over "occupied territory," which he began comparing to a South African bantustan, and cast himself as the Nelson Mandela of D.C.'s liberation. Now even Jackson's supporters are saying he will be in trouble if he can't point his adopted people toward the promised land. His TV show, "Jesse Jackson," is a flop. His role as spokesman for Afro-America has been eclipsed by the ascendence of moderates Doug Wilder, the governor of Virginia, and Ron Brown, the Democratic National Committee chairman who used to be a Jackson ally. If Wilder runs for president in 1992, as he seems interested in doing, a third Jackson bid will seem redundant. If Wilder doesn't run, Jackson still faces the prospect of becoming the black Harold Stassen. The campaign for statehood could be Jesse's last chance to put up or shut up. ●

A comprehensive case for the use of force.

THE STAKES IN THE GULF

By Stephen J. Solarz

Ironies can sometimes be painful. I began my political career in 1966 as the campaign manager for one of the first anti-war congressional candidates in the country. Now, a quarter century later, I find myself supporting a policy in the Persian Gulf that might well lead to a war that many believe could become another Vietnam. Such a position is more and more anomalous, I know, in the Democratic Party. And yet I cannot accept, or be dissuaded by, the analogy with Vietnam.

In Vietnam no vital American interests were at stake. The crisis in the Gulf poses a challenge not only to fundamental American interests, but to essential American values. In Indochina the cost in blood and treasure was out of all proportion to the expected gains from a successful defense of South Vietnam. In the Gulf the potential costs of the American commitment are far outweighed by the benefits of a successful effort to implement the U.N. resolutions calling for the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait. The war in Vietnam dragged on for years and ended in an American defeat. A war in the Gulf, if it cannot be avoided, is likely to end with a decisive American victory in months, if not in weeks. Sometimes you are condemned to repeat the past if you *do* remember it—that is, if you draw the wrong lessons from it, and let the memory of the past distort your view of the present.

STEPHEN J. SOLARZ is a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from New York.

The United States clearly has a vital interest in preventing Saddam Hussein from getting away with his invasion and annexation of Kuwait. An aggressive Iraq bent on the absorption of its neighbors represents a serious economic threat to American interests. A hostile Iraq armed with chemical, biological, and eventually nuclear weapons represents a "clear and present danger" to American security. And a lawless Iraq represents a direct challenge to our hopes for a new and more peaceful world order. Any one of these reasons would be sufficient to justify a firm American response to this brutal and unprovoked act of aggression. Together they make a compelling case for doing whatever needs to be done, in concert with our coalition partners, to secure the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and to establish a more stable balance of power in one of the most volatile and strategically important parts of the world.

There is, for a start, the question of oil. If Saddam succeeds in incorporating Kuwait into Iraq, he will be in a position to control, by intimidation or invasion, the oil resources of the entire Gulf. This would enable him, and him alone, to determine not only the price, but also the production levels, of up to half the proven oil reserves in the world. This is not simply a question of the price of gas at the pump. It is a matter of the availability of the essential energy that we and our friends around the world need to heat our homes, fuel our factories, and keep our economies vigorous.

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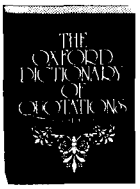

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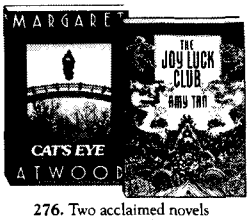

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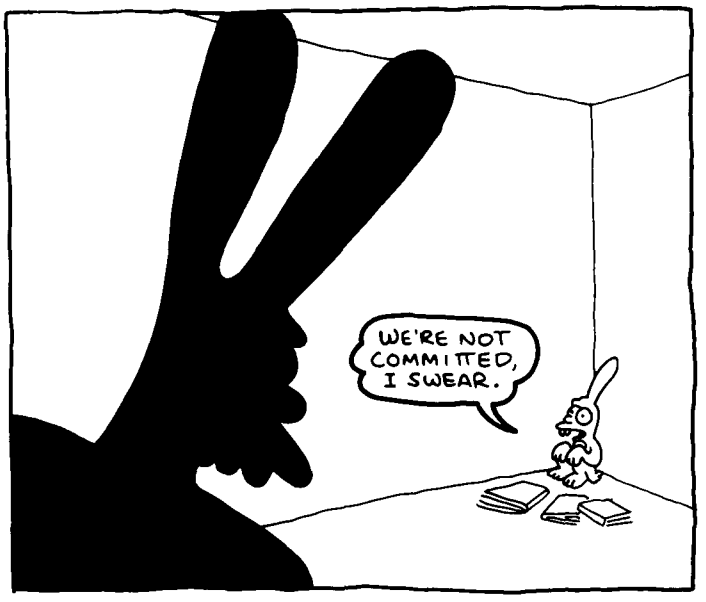

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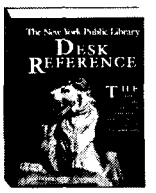

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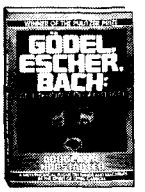

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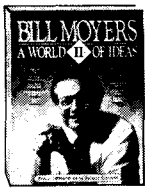

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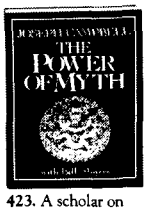

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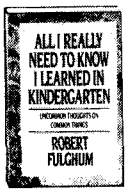

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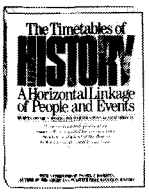

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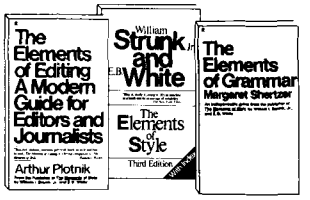
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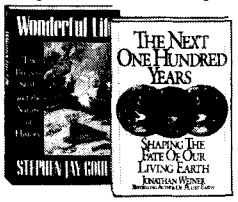

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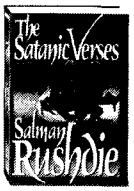

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policy that will reduce our dependence on Gulf oil. This was obvious at the time of the 1973 oil embargo, and it is obvious today. But regret at our failure to have diminished our dependence on Gulf oil, and our resolve to diminish that dependence in the future, will not solve our problem now. Even if we no longer needed to import oil, most other countries would still persist in their dependence; and to the extent that our economic well-being is linked to theirs, we cannot expect to insulate ourselves from the consequences of a cutoff in this essential source of supply.

Some have argued that Saddam's control of the oil resources of the Gulf would not pose an unacceptable threat to American interests, since he would presumably wish to sell the oil in order to raise revenues for his benign and malignant purposes. But Saddam would also be in a position to cut back dramatically on production, which would give him considerable leverage over the rest of the world, while assuring, through the inflated prices that his reduced production would command, an adequate level of revenue. It would be unthinkable for the United States to permit a rampaging dictator like Saddam to have his hands on the economic jugular of the world.

Far more important than the question of oil, however, is the extent to which, in American constitutional terms, Saddam is a "clear and present danger." This is a man who twice in the last decade has led his country into war, first against Iran in 1980, and then against Kuwait in 1990. Driven by an uncontrollable appetite for power, and by the ideological imperatives of the Baath party, which is committed to unifying the Arab nation under Iraqi control, he is determined to dominate the entire Middle East. President Bush's parallels between Saddam and Hitler are wildly overdrawn. But if there are fundamental differences between Saddam and Hitler, there are also instructive similarities. Like Hitler, Saddam has an unappeasable will to power combined with a ruthless willingness to employ whatever means are necessary to achieve it.

Having stood up to the combined opposition of the superpowers, the Security Council, and the Arab League, Saddam's sense of invincibility will certainly swell—and the stage would be set for more campaigns of conquest and annexation. Moreover, if Saddam prevails in the current crisis, he might eventually pose a direct threat to the United States itself; it would be unacceptable to live in the shadow of an irrational man's nuclear arsenal, even if it is much smaller than our own. Iraq has remorselessly pursued a variety of long-range weapons programs that cannot be justified by any legitimate defensive needs. In addition to its nuclear program, Iraq is now working on an intercontinental ballistic missile system. Saddam is probably not in a position to produce a nuclear weapon within the next year, but he may well be able to do so in five to ten years. If we do not stop him now, we will almost certainly be obligated to confront him later, when he will be chillingly more formidable.

How, in the context of a political resolution of the Gulf crisis, can we deal with the threat of Iraq's destabilizing weapons of mass destruction? Ironically, they will pose less of a problem if it should come to war, since Baghdad's chemical, biological, and nuclear facilities would be high-priority targets, and its capacity to use these instruments of demonic destruction would be crippled for a long time to come. There is a real danger, however, that a peaceful resolution of the crisis would leave Saddam with his terrible arsenal intact, and his efforts to acquire nuclear weapons proceeding apace. Such an outcome would be a Pyrrhic victory. The Bush administration has so far failed to accord this problem the priority it deserves.

Some will point out that we have lived for many decades with other countries possessing such weapons and have not felt compelled to insist upon their dismantlement. Why should we be any more concerned about the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Iraq than by Pakistan, India, Brazil, Argentina, or South Africa? The answer is that although the nuclear programs of these other countries are a source of legitimate concern, none of them has already used weapons of mass destruction. Apologists for Iraq have argued further that our anxieties are misplaced, inasmuch as Iraq is a signatory to the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty; but Baghdad used chemical weapons in spite of its signature on the treaty prohibiting their use. In the matter of treaties, Iraq is not exactly to be trusted; and an accomplished sinner like Saddam will not be overly tormented by breaking his own word.

Still others have suggested that Iraq will not be able to develop nuclear weapons without the type of assistance that has been cut off by the sanctions. This argument fails on a number of counts. First, it assumes that the sanctions will remain in effect in perpetuity. Second, it ignores the fact that our failure to prevent Pakistan from acquiring the components for its nuclear weapons program shows that a strategy of technological denial is not likely to succeed. Third, it turns a blind eye to the chemical weapons and biological agents already in Iraq's arsenal. Fourth, there is no doubt that Iraq has already obtained sufficient fissile material from both its operable reactor and the destroyed Osirak reactor to build several nuclear weapons, even without outside assistance, in the next ten years. The Iraqi nuclear program is too far along to be stopped by an economic embargo.

Had it not been for the Israeli attack on the Osirak reactor in 1981, Iraq would in all likelihood already have nuclear weapons. Indeed, many of those who criticized the Israeli raid at the time now recognize how fortunate it was for the entire region that the Israelis acted so decisively. If Israel had heeded the advice of the timid, Iraq would likely have used nuclear weapons in its war against Iran. Put starkly, there can be no prospect for long-term stability in the Gulf unless Iraq's weapons of mass destruction are dismantled or destroyed. The only question is one of means.

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It is conceivable that Saddam can be persuaded to disarm himself of these weapons, if the United States and its coalition partners make it clear that this is an essential component of a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The international community should spell out its determination to maintain the sanctions in force—even if Iraq withdraws from Kuwait and complies with the other conditions of the various U.N. resolutions—until Baghdad agrees to dismantle the weapons. Still, we must recognize that this strategy may fail—in which case the United States must retain its option to use force to eliminate both the production centers for these weapons and their long-range delivery systems. This policy will enjoy the strong support of many of our partners, including a number of Arab countries. On two recent trips to the region I was struck by the great fear of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and the recognition of the necessity of eliminating this nonconventional threat by whatever means are required.

The third reason for thwarting Saddam's ambitions lies in our hopes for the establishment of a new world order. How we resolve the first crisis of the post-cold war world will have profound historical consequences. Will this be a world in which relations among nations are governed by the rule of law, or will it be a Hobbesian world? Will it be a world in which the strong continue to dominate the weak, or will considerations of justice prevail over realities of force? Had the world responded with collective action when Japan invaded Manchuria, when Italy invaded Abyssinia, and when Hitler occupied the Rhineland, we might have been spared some of history's worst horrors. If we succeed in our efforts to secure the withdrawal of Iraqi forces and the restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait through concerted international action, we will have created a powerful precedent for a much more peaceful world in the future. But if Saddam prevails, the word will have gone out to despots around the globe that the old rules still apply, that aggression still pays.

Kuwait is being devoured before our eyes. Newborn infants have been snatched out of incubators and left to die so the incubators can be carted back to hospitals in Baghdad. Thousands of Kuwaitis have been killed. Pregnant women have been bayoneted. Men have had their eyeballs burned out by cigarettes. Within a matter of months, Kuwait will have ceased to exist, the Kuwaitis having been murdered or exiled and the physical infrastructure of their country having been dismantled or destroyed. The failure of the United States and the international community to respond to previous acts of aggression is hardly a reason for not standing up to the man who is guilty of this one. The bitter fate that has befallen Kuwait should also lead the coalition of nations that has rallied to Kuwait's defense to require that Iraq pay full compensation for the havoc it has wrought. Baghdad's invasion was also the biggest bank heist in history; and if Iraq is not compelled to pay compensation, it will have been a handsome day's work for Saddam.

This crisis provides a rare opportunity, perhaps the first since the dawn of the modern age, to create a world order in which the international community upholds the sanctity of existing borders and the principle that nations should not be permitted to invade and to annex their weaker neighbors. The overwhelming votes in the U.N. Security Council demonstrate that there is, at last, an international consensus in favor of this objective. They also suggest that the dream of Franklin Roosevelt and the other founders of the United Nations, that the world organization could be used by the great powers as a mechanism for the preservation of peace, is being realized.

How shall we accomplish these essential objectives in a way that is consistent with our interests and compatible with our values? A national debate, stimulated by a series of hearings in the House and the Senate, has already begun. It would appear that there are, broadly speaking, three ways in which the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, the restoration of the legitimate government in Kuwait, the payment of compensation to the victims of this aggression, and the establishment of a more stable balance of power in the region can be achieved.

The first is through the continued and perhaps protracted application of sanctions. Admiral William Crowe and General David Jones, former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, among others, have argued that we should be willing to give sanctions a chance. If we wait another six, twelve, or eighteen months, they contend, the sanctions are likely to compel an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. "What's the rush?" asks *The New York Times*. By waiting a little longer, these critics of the president's policy maintain, we can achieve our objectives without a war.

Of course it would be better to give sanctions more of a chance to work, if there is any reasonable possibility that they will bring about an Iraqi withdrawal, rather than take our troops to war. Nobody views with equanimity the loss of lives that an armed conflict would entail. And the supporters of a "go-slow" policy have rightly pointed out that the sanctions have received an unprecedented degree of support from the international community. All of Iraq's oil exports, which provided 90 percent of its foreign exchange earnings, have been cut off, and Iraq is clearly beginning to feel the economic consequences of its international isolation. Its factories are shutting down. Its productive capabilities have been impaired.

And yet it is difficult to be optimistic about the success of the sanctions. According to the detailed analysis by the International Institute for Economics of the likely impact of sanctions on Iraq, the embargo should bring about a reduction of approximately 40 percent in Iraq's gross national product. This will undoubtedly be a very serious blow to the Iraqi economy. But whether it will result in a withdrawal from Kuwait is another matter. Even Crowe, whose testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee provided political legitima-

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cy to the "go-slow" strategy, has said that his judgment on the efficacy of sanctions is "entirely speculative."

Iraq is a fertile country, and it will be able to feed itself. The smuggling of food and other essential items is already taking place across the Iranian, Jordanian, Turkish, and Syrian borders, and Iraq will be able to adjust as the economic pinch tightens. If the analysts are correct, the per capita income of Iraq will be reduced from approximately $2,600 to $1,600 a year. Even with its 40 percent reduction, however, Iraq will still have a per capita income more than twice that of Egypt, for instance, and substantially larger than that of Turkey, another of the front-line states. In any case, even if his people have to accept a less filling and nutritious diet, Saddam and his military will surely have enough to eat. This man was willing to persist in his war against Iran despite a million Iraqi casualties. It is hard to believe that he will be willing to withdraw from Kuwait simply because the Iraqi people will be forced to reduce their caloric intake or accept a diminution in their standard of living.

On the military side, there is no doubt that the sanctions are having an impact. As CIA Director William Webster told Congress, the international economic boycott is likely to affect seriously the Iraqi air force within ninety days, and to degrade to a somewhat lesser extent other Iraqi forces over a period of nine to twelve months. Even so, the consensus among military experts is that even after a full year of sanctions, the capacity of the Iraqi forces in Kuwait to defend themselves will not be appreciably diminished. Most analysts believe that Saddam has written off his air force, given the vast air superiority enjoyed by the United States and its partners. The components of his military machine that constitute the core of his power—infantry, artillery, tanks, and armored vehicles already deployed in Kuwait—are precisely those that would be least affected by an extended embargo. The protracted application of sanctions will give the Iraqis time, moreover, to dig in and build up their defenses, to construct more roads and water-carrying pipelines from Iraq to Kuwait, thereby making an assault against them more costly in American lives.

Those who argue that sanctions without the use of force will be sufficient to compel an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait have never explained precisely how an embargo is likely to produce this result. They have failed to establish the connection between the undoubted economic impact of the sanctions and a political decision to quit Kuwait. There would appear to be only two ways in which sanctions can produce an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait and the other concessions necessary to end the crisis satisfactorily: either Saddam will decide to withdraw from Kuwait, or he will be overthrown by his own military and replaced by a leader (or a junta) that would make this decision.

But what are the chances, assuming the sanctions are maintained for another six to twelve months, or even longer, that Saddam will be willing to withdraw from Kuwait? He does not have to worry, after all, about running for re-election, or about a contentious Congress, or about a critical press, or about declining approval ratings in the polls. And no one can seriously believe that Saddam is more concerned about the well-being of his people than he is about the maximization of his power. This is not a sentimental man. Saddam is likely to calculate that it is a matter of time before the coalition crumbles and the sanctions erode. If all he has to worry about is the continued application of sanctions, he is much more likely to tough it out.

This leaves the possibility of an overthrow of Saddam by his military. There must be many officers in the Iraqi army who understand that Saddam is leading them down the desert dunes to disaster and would dearly like to remove him. But Saddam has managed to stifle any stirring of discontent not only in his people, but especially in his military establishment. The armed forces are riddled with informers; and Saddam has demonstrated repeatedly that he will act with extraordinary ruthlessness against anyone whom he even suspects of plotting against him. Those who run afoul of his paranoia do not live to enjoy their own.

Thus it would appear that the prospects for the success of the sanctions are less likely than the prospects for the collapse of the coalition if we wait for the sanctions to be given more time to work. The coalition that President Bush has assembled with such skill is a fractious and fragile grouping, in which the Arab members in particular have different interests than we do. The incident on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem this fall was a clear warning about the flammability of this part of the world. The cultural repercussions of political events could easily destroy the coalition. And surely that is precisely what Saddam, a Machiavellian manipulator of men and events, will attempt to achieve.

Nor will the pressures on the coalition come only from abroad. Once it becomes clear that Bush has opted for the prolonged application of sanctions, there will be strong demands to start bringing back many of the troops that we have sent to Saudi Arabia. Four hundred thousand soldiers are not necessary, if our sole purpose is to defend Saudi Arabia. And it will be very difficult to sustain such a massive presence in Saudi Arabia indefinitely, given the logistical requirements of such a deployment. Once we begin to withdraw forces from the Gulf, our coalition partners, most of whom believe that sanctions alone cannot induce Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait, are likely to conclude that it will be only a matter of time before Saddam prevails. At that point they will begin cutting their own deals, in anticipation of emerging regional realities.

Even if the coalition were to hold together while we waited for the sanctions to work, the chances are that by the time we concluded—say, a year or two from now—that they were not sufficient to induce Saddam to withdraw, we would have lost our will to use force. While some who have urged the president to give sanc-

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tions more of a chance to work have said that they would be prepared to support the use of force if the sanctions fail, the truth is that the great majority of those who favor waiting would still oppose a war against Iraq even if the sanctions failed to achieve an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait. And with the sanctions eroding, and the use of force no longer a politically viable option, Saddam would be well on his way to a victory. A "go-slow" strategy, then, is more likely to play into the hands of Saddam than to deliver him into the hands of the coalition arrayed against him.

For those who believe that there are no differences among nations that cannot be resolved diplomatically, there is always the hope of a negotiated settlement. But we must not generalize from our own fond norms. So far Saddam has not given any indication of a willingness to withdraw entirely and unconditionally from what his propaganda calls the nineteenth province of Iraq. An odd assortment of international itinerants, including Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and Kurt Waldheim, King Hussein of Jordan and Yasir Arafat, Yevgeny Primakov, Willy Brandt and Yasuhiro Nakasone, Muhammad Ali and Jesse Jackson have all beaten a path to Baghdad, only to return without anything to show for their efforts (except a handful of hostages who would have been released anyway when Saddam concluded that they were no longer valuable to him as a shield against attack). I strongly suspect that James Baker, even if he travels to Baghdad, is no more likely to come home with his pockets full of concessions.

More to the point, what exactly is there to negotiate about? Some have suggested that we offer Bubiyan and Warbah, the two Kuwaiti islands that block Saddam's unfettered access to the Persian Gulf, as well as the Rumaillah oil fields, just south of the Iraqi border, in exchange for Saddam's withdrawal from the rest of Kuwait. But Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, a majority of the Arab League, the Security Council of the United Nations, and the Bush administration have all rightly rejected this idea, on the grounds that it would be a reward for aggression and set the stage for additional acts of banditry.

Saddam himself has attempted to link the question of an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait to an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza, or at least to the convening of an international conference to resolve the Palestinian problem. It should be obvious that this is simply an attempt to sow the seeds of discord among the countries arrayed against him. The two are entirely different issues. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was an unprovoked act of aggression, whereas Israel came into possession of the territories only after it was attacked by a coalition of Arab countries in 1967. Saddam did not invade Kuwait to help the Palestinians, but to maximize his own power. He is not moved by the plight of the Palestinians, or by anybody else's plight. He is merely exploiting it. And the Palestinians seem happy to assist in their own exploitation.

Paradoxically, if any real possibility of resolving this crisis peacefully exists, it lies not in negotiations leading to concessions that reward aggression, but in convincing Saddam that we are prepared to go to war if he does not comply with the terms of the Security Council resolutions. I suspect that it was a dawning realization that we are serious about opposing his grandiose ambitions, with force if necessary, that lay behind his recent release of the hostages. Surely it was not because he was suddenly filled with the holiday spirit.

In our joy over the reunion of the hostages with their families, however, we must not forget the threat Iraq still poses to vital American interests. Not until Saddam is finally persuaded that he has to make a choice between staying and dying or leaving and living will there be any real chance of inducing him to withdraw from Kuwait. Yet if such an ultimatum is delivered to him—and it is clearly implicit in the Security Council resolution authorizing the use of force—we have to be prepared to use force in the event he refuses to withdraw.

This leads, then, to the third way of bringing the crisis to an end. The use of force, of course, raises profound political, moral, and constitutional questions. A war will undoubtedly bring many casualties—we should not delude ourselves with notions of surgical strikes—and no one can say with certainty what would happen in the wake of such a conflict. Force should be a last resort. But a last resort is sometimes a necessary resort. Last is not the same as never.

Some of those who oppose the use of armed force have argued that war will increase instability and anti-Americanism in the Middle East. There is a measure of truth in this analysis. Still, a peacetime victory of Saddam over the coalition would surely represent a more considerable threat to the stability of the region than a wartime victory of the coalition over Saddam. It is important to note that the Middle East countries that are supposedly most vulnerable to Arab radicalization are precisely the countries that are supporting us most strongly, because their leaders need no lessons in the consequences of allowing Saddam to go unchecked.

Of course, there will be some expressions of hostility toward the United States in the Arab world if American weapons are used against Iraqi soldiers. But those expressions will surely be offset to the extent that other Arab countries are fighting alongside us in a war against Iraq, especially if we make it clear that our intention is not to occupy Iraq but to liberate Kuwait. Recent history demonstrates that the application of American force in the Middle East does not lead to a regional recoil from America: we were warned of the possibility of massive anti-American demonstrations if we attempted to punish Qaddafi for his role in a terrorist attack against American servicemen a few years ago, but our air strike against Libya in 1986 produced little negative response in the Arab world, and even seems to have resulted in enhanced respect for the United States.

Those who are anxious about the unanticipated con-

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sequences of a war have focused attention on the casualties that would result, even from a relatively brief and decisive campaign. I yield to nobody in my concern for American lives; but we must face the hard truth that whatever the casualties we might suffer, they are likely to be far smaller than those that would be inflicted upon us if we postpone the day of reckoning until Saddam has added nuclear weapons to his current arsenal of chemical and biological weapons. Forcefully denying Saddam the instruments of a nuclear war is itself an expression of concern for American lives. And if the maintenance of a large-scale American presence in the Gulf is a source of fiscal and political anxiety, surely we will be obliged to station a much larger deterrent force in the region if we permit Saddam and his army to remain in Kuwait than if we destroy much of his military machine and his weapons of mass destruction in the process of liberating Kuwait.

Others have suggested that even if we cannot force Saddam out of Kuwait, we can contain his expansionist tendencies and insulate the rest of the region from his marauding ambitions by permanently stationing American troops in the Gulf. They remind us that we contained Soviet and North Korean expansion for forty years and ask why a policy of containment cannot work in the Middle East. These critics are rather Panglossian about the realities of the Middle East. In Europe and on the Korean peninsula, the presence of American forces contributed to the stability of the countries we were trying to defend. In the Arab world, the long-term presence of many American troops would be almost certainly destabilizing.

It is doubtful, moreover, that Saudi Arabia, which is the most conservative Islamic society in the world, would permit us to maintain a sizable presence in the country for any appreciable period. The Saudis are right: if we keep our troops in the region, we may end up contributing unwittingly to the downfall of the very regimes that we set out to defend. And if we have brought 400,000 American troops to Saudi Arabia to force the Iraqis out of Kuwait, and then accept Baghdad's annexation of Kuwait as a fait accompli, the Saudis are unlikely to have much confidence in our willingness to defend them, and will be more likely to seek their security in a vassal relationship with Iraq. Just as we resisted the Finlandization of Europe, we must resist the Saddamization of the Middle East.

If the president concludes that the sanctions are not likely to work, that there is no realistic prospect for an acceptable political settlement, and that we have no alternative but to use force, it will be essential for him to go to war multilaterally rather than unilaterally. The liberation of Kuwait and the elimination of the Iraqi threat is not only an American responsibility. Our Arab and European coalition partners have just as much—indeed, some of them have more—at stake than we do. It is one thing to be the head of an international posse attempting to deprive a criminal state of the rewards of its aggression. It is quite another for the United States to arrogate to itself the role of policeman of the world. The former is a task that the American people can understand and accept. The latter is an assignment that they do not seek.

Should it come to war, however, we will not be alone. Our Arab partners in this coalition (with the possible exception of Syria) are fully prepared to go to war along with us if that should prove necessary. The British have also been stalwart in their willingness to use force—and even Neil Kinnock, the Labour leader who once supported unilateral disarmament, has spoken up in favor of force should Saddam refuse to withdraw from Kuwait. President Mitterrand has indicated that if the coalition should go to war, France will fight with it. And though it is true that the majority of the forces deployed in the Gulf are American, other countries have made sizable contributions as well. By the end of the year the British, the Egyptians, and the Syrians will have doubled their troop strength in Saudi Arabia, and the total number of foreign forces available for combat will be 225,000. The armed units from twenty-eight countries lend the coalition not only legitimacy, but a substantial increase in military power.

Would we like our coalition partners to shoulder still more of the burden? Of course. But most of those who are critical about the efforts of our European and Arab coalition partners would still be opposed to American policy even if the military contribution offered by other countries were significantly increased. At any rate, if undoing Saddam's annexation of Kuwait is in our interest, we should be prepared to do whatever is required to achieve this objective, rather than act in ways contrary to our interests simply because we have not received all the help from other nations we might have desired. A decision to use force should be based on strategic necessities, not on accounting formulas.

If the president does decide on the use of force, it will be important for him to have the support not only of our coalition partners, but also of Congress. There is no more fateful decision a nation can make than that of risking the lives of its men and women by going to war. It would be a serious constitutional and political mistake on the part of the president if he were to commit our forces to combat (in the absence of an unexpected provocation, such as a preemptive Iraqi attack) without congressional authorization. And there is another reason why the president should seek the support of Congress. If we go to war and if we win a quick and decisive victory, as is quite probable, the fact that the president did not seek the prior approval of Congress may become a source of debate among historians and columnists, but is not likely to hurt the president seriously with either Congress or the American people. But war is unpredictable, and we may get bogged down in a protracted conflict. Under those circumstances, with casualties beginning to mount, the president's ability to sustain support for the war will be gravely compromised if he fails to secure the authorization of Congress before hostilities begin.

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A half century ago, when Hitler invaded Poland, the British House of Commons gathered to debate what course Britain should follow. After a halting defense of government policy by Neville Chamberlain, one of the opposition MPs rose and began his remarks with the phrase, "Speaking for the Labour Party . . ." Instantly a voice thundered from the back benches: "Speak for England!" It is time to remember this advice. The crisis in the Gulf is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. It is an American issue.

A decision to go to war should not be made, under any circumstances, on the basis of partisan considerations. Still, the Democrats must ponder the political consequences of a reflexive refusal even to consider the use of force. The party has suffered in too many national elections from the popular perception that it is categorically and emotionally unwilling to use force under almost any circumstances other than a direct attack on the United States itself. If Democrats are not prepared to support the use of force in a situation like this, when the aggression is so unambiguous, the international community so cohesive, and the stakes so great, how can anyone ever expect the Democratic Party to support the use of force in defense of vital American interests in the far more common circumstances of confusion, ambiguity, and uncertainty?

I am not arguing that the administration's policies toward the Gulf should be immune from criticism. However skillfully the president and his subordinates have managed this crisis since August, our relationship with Iraq was handled with a comparable lack of skill prior to that date. There was no excuse for putting our policy toward Iraq on automatic pilot for two whole years after its war with Iran ended—which is exactly what the administration did, when it opposed congressional efforts to impose sanctions against Iraq, on the naive assumption that by kowtowing to Saddam we would be in a better position to influence his behavior. By declaring that we had no obligation to come to the defense of Kuwait, and by taking no position on Iraq's border dispute with Kuwait, administration spokesmen clearly contributed to a perception on Saddam's part that we would not resist his use of force in the Gulf.

There will be plenty of time later for post-mortems on the genesis of this affair. Those who were responsible for creating the climate in which such an invasion could take place should bear their fair measure of responsibility. But we must not let the discussion about the immediate danger lose itself in debater's points. The challenge now is to develop a policy that will enable us to undo the consequences of Iraq's aggression.

If we succeed in blocking Saddam's ambitions and restoring Kuwait's independence, we will have preserved our continued access to a stable supply of oil. The stability of the Arab governments that have joined with us to oppose Saddam will be significantly strengthened. We will have a good chance of eliminating Saddam's weapons of mass destruction and setting back for a substantial period of time, perhaps forever, Iraq's efforts to obtain nuclear weapons. The prospects for progress in the peace process between Israel and the Arabs will be greatly enhanced. We will have reversed a monumental injustice, we will have thwarted one of the most ruthless expansionists in the world, and we will have created the basis for a new international order.

If this isn't worth fighting for, I don't know, as an American and as a Democrat, what is. ●

How long can Cuban communism last?

LOW FIDELITY

By Charles Lane

New Year's Day marks the thirty-second anniversary of Fidel Castro's ascent to power in Cuba. As usual, the streets of Havana will fill with organized celebrants. Many this year will wave banners proclaiming Castro's new slogan, "Socialism or Death," or shout that apocalyptic sentiment on cue. But on the same day, as if to underscore the grimness of the choice, Castro's revolution will receive a crippling economic blow. The system of subsidized barter under which the Soviet Union underwrites the Cuban economy (and provides all of its oil) will give way to trade based on hard-currency market prices. The Soviets apparently want to wean Cuba gradually. They still value it as a listening post on the U.S. doorstep and have no ready substitutes for Cuban sugar, citrus fruit, and nickel. But the Soviets are determined to end the hemorrhaging of

continued on page 28

CHARLES LANE covers foreign affairs for *Newsweek.*

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their resources; they may even insist that the Cubans begin paying off some of their past debt to them, which is estimated at more than $15 billion. And if the Soviet Union's own decay sharply accelerates—a real possibility—trade between the two countries could simply collapse.

The decline in Soviet trade forces Cuba into what is essentially an extreme form of the "structural adjustment" that so many Latin countries have faced over the last decade or so. Suddenly the Soviets have switched into a tight-fisted role akin to that of the International Monetary Fund (except that the IMF has money in its coffers). If Castro wants to keep his country afloat, he must now ask people to scrimp even more, and to start scrambling against all the other poor countries trying to earn hard currency. In any country, even one with a working market economy and flexible political institutions, this would be politically dangerous.

For Fidel, it is a trip into a labyrinth. His economy is singularly ill-equipped to compete in world trade. Years of dependence on freebies have compounded Cuba's inherent Communist tendency to shelter inefficiency. What productive capability Cuba does have was geared, at Soviet insistence, largely to sugar—hardly a scarce commodity. And the U.S. trade embargo excludes Cuba from its best potential market. Cuba can't get credit from other Western countries because it suspended payments in 1986 on its $6 billion hard currency debt.

Already Cubans have begun to learn how artificial even their meager prosperity was. When a single Soviet grain ship showed up behind schedule last January, the Cubans had to raise the price of bread and eggs, cut rations, and dip into dwindling hard currency reserves (now estimated at just $50 million) to buy feed for pigs and chickens. Spare parts for 5,000 Hungarian buses that make up Cuba's public transport fleet are scarce. The shortage of Czech tires for cane-cutting machines slowed this year's sugar harvest. There are regular brownouts in Havana, mostly to save oil, but partly because Cuban power plants use parts from East Germany, which no longer exists.

Castro's reserve of political capital is nearing exhaustion too. He must appeal for sacrifice at precisely the moment when his moral right to rule Cuba is more widely questioned than ever before. This loss of legitimacy is in part a consequence of the disintegration of communism in Europe. In Latin America the U.S. ouster of Panama's General Manuel Antonio Noriega and the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua have cost Castro his last remaining strategic allies. The election in Nicaragua, coupled with the phased electoral defeat of General Augusto Pinochet and his anointed successors in Chile, has left Castro groping to explain why in Cuba alone it is unnecessary to vote.

At home, Castro is still recovering from the July 1989 treason and drug-trafficking trial of General Arnaldo Ochoa, the No. 2 man in the Cuban army. The televised trial exposed corruption and intrigue at the highest levels of the Cuban state, and prompted rumors that Ochoa's real crime had been to contemplate a coup against Castro—or merely to advocate reforms in the Communist system. Castro's decision to execute Ochoa, in spite of what Castro himself acknowledged was widespread public support for clemency, punctured the *comandante-en-jefe*'s carefully cultivated populist mystique.

Many foreign diplomats and Eastern European journalists in Havana believe the Ochoa trial represented a pre-emptive strike by Fidel and his brother Raúl, the flinty defense minister, against "*perestroikistas*" in the Communist hierarchy. In his June 1989 speech announcing Ochoa's arrest, Raúl hardly mentioned the drug charges for which Ochoa was later to be executed. But he did invite unnamed army officers "who do not want our type of socialism" to depart for the United States, Poland, or Hungary. He noted that "people raise complaints against the commander in chief ... more than ever." *Perestroikismo* appears to be particularly strong among the intelligentsia. This year a wave of prominent defections carried twenty-seven Cuban scientists, artists, musicians, and diplomats to the West.

Whoever they are, the *perestroikistas* are right: only free market economics and open politics could cure Cuba's multiple ills. But Castro instinctively, and accurately, fears the political chain reaction that could set off: Eastern Europe and Nicaragua, he has said, show that even tiny concessions to capitalism wind up leading to "desertion and surrender." "Socialism or Death," his alternative, blends wrenching economic austerity with redoubled efforts at political control and mobilization.

Economically, the emerging centerpiece of Castro's plan is his "special period in times of peace," a package of drastic measures designed to slash Cuba's oil use, boost food production, and shift resources into activities, such as Castro's ambitious tourism program, that earn dollars. The plan depends on a chilling blend of social dislocation and technological retrogression. Twenty thousand people, many of them laid off from their jobs in Havana, will soon be moved to the countryside as temporary stoop labor. Factories have been closed to save fuel. Trucks are being replaced by horse-drawn carts; tractors are to be replaced by oxen. Castro has warned that there may be no new women's clothing produced for the next five years. Farm officials are breeding the *jutía*, a kind of rat that lives in cane fields, as a source of food.

At the same time, Castro is pursuing new trading partners. Cuba and China did $420 million worth of business last year. (China is shipping Cuba hundreds of thousands of bicycles to take the place of those Hungarian buses.) Last year Cuba sold $100 million worth of vaccines to Brazil, and is trying to peddle oth-

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er medical equipment, such as AIDS test kits. When the new trading system with Moscow shakes out, there may even be benefits in it for Cuba; since 1986 Cuba has paid above the world price for Soviet oil, thanks to the quirky pricing system used by the two countries. Pravda recently suggested that Castro's energy-saving drive is a cover for hoarding Soviet petroleum to resell for dollars. Fidel called that a "lie"; the Cubans claim that Soviet oil shipments are running 20 percent behind last year's 13 million-ton level.

Such expedients will help Castro cushion the shock of a Soviet aid reduction. But as a plan for general economic adjustment, the special period presents Castro with a series of contradictions. Take tourism. In theory, Cuba's balmy beaches could once again make the island a mecca for fun-seekers. The government says it earned $149 million from tourism last year. But visitors from rich, democratic countries are agents of ideological contamination. Fencing them off is no solution; Cubans bitterly resent "tourism apartheid," the rules banning them from hotels and nightclubs for foreigners.

Castro recently announced that the Communist Party's staff will be cut by 50 percent. That saves money but also converts thousands who once had a stake in the system into jobless drifters. The special period would freeze new investment in health care; rationing of increasingly scarce medical supplies is being introduced as well. But this erodes one of the few aspects of Cuban socialism everyone likes. Shifting workers from Havana may ease urban food shortages, but former office drones are notoriously inefficient at field labor. Using carts instead of trucks saves gas but bogs down an already sluggish system of distribution; shutting down factories will exacerbate consumer goods shortages. The whole plan presupposes a disciplined work force of conscientious socialists, when in fact slacking off on the job is a well-established Cuban self-defense mechanism.

Politically, Castro is walking the fine line between weaning his people from Soviet aid and influence, and sacrificing communism altogether. He is trying gradually to recast his brand of socialism as an expression of Cuban nationalism, portraying it as the only system that ever preserved the island's independence from the United States. Thus José Martí, the poet laureate of the nineteenth-century Cuban struggle to get free of Spain and the United States, is once again replacing Lenin as a public icon. Though only months ago it was official doctrine in Cuba that Eastern European communism was the result of popular revolution, Castro now draws a (largely accurate) distinction between his indigenous revolution and the implantation of socialism in Eastern Europe by Stalin's armies.

Members of the new political class that has grown up under Castro's aegis may well accept these arguments, if only to rationalize their own privileges. Before these people help to oust Castro, they will probably need some assurances that a post-Castro order won't simply mean a return to the *status quo ante* of 1959. But whether most Cubans think Castro's brand of anti-Yankeeism still compensates for their hardships is basically unknowable, given the lack of free expression on the island. In April the United States tried to beam Television Martí to Cuba, a not-so-subtle, and not-so-successful, attempt to stir the political pot by letting Cubans look at Eastern Europe and U.S. consumer bounty for themselves. The predawn broadcasts were easily jammed by Cuba's military, but not before Castro had turned the affair into a major propaganda assault on U.S. "teleaggression." Cubans I spoke with, however, seemed mainly curious about the channel. Two men told me they had stayed up until three a.m., hoping to catch a glimpse of "Kate and Allie" before Castro's forces blipped it out.

TV Martí may have been redundant anyway. Cubans seem perfectly aware of their country's growing economic and political isolation, unhappy about the consequences, and deeply anxious about the future. Disaffection is most palpable among Cuba's young people; more than half of its population had not yet been born when Fidel took power. This generation never knew him as a dashing guerrilla fighter, only as the graying Communist puritan whose stern calls for sacrifice and obedience never seem to end. They long for a break from the Marxist-Leninist dogma that rules their schools, and for more consumer goods. "My future here is very bad," says Abdel, a 23-year-old who dabbles in the black market to augment his factory salary. "We need a change here like Gorbachev is doing." Crime, drinking, and other forms of "degeneracy" are often their only releases. Cuba has an incipient counterculture: the "*freekiss*"—pronounced "freakies"—who grow their hair long, hang out in the parks, and worship American heavy metal.

Increasingly, the young are tuning Castro out. One night I witnessed a late-night block party in Havana, sponsored by the Union of Communist Youth to show kids the Revolution can still rock 'n' roll. There were free drinks, songs by the popular group Moncada, and, at midnight, an appearance by Fidel Castro himself. Party militants near the podium burst into applause, but those standing farther back in the crowd, who had come mainly for music and a good time, began walking out on him after a few minutes of his speech.

Dissident groups on the island, never very large, have been decimated by a wave of recent arrests. Young people crop up frequently among the ranks of the detained. One of the most interesting cases of late involved Jorge Quintana, a night student in mathematics at the University of Havana. On January 1, 1990, Quintana fired off an angry letter to the Union of Communist Youth, labeling Castro a "trai-

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tor," and calling for sweeping reforms. "The levels of democracy do not correspond to the level of development reached by our society," Quintana wrote, according to a copy of the letter that circulated among Western diplomats. "What you call revolution is really Stalinism." Quintana and three fellow students who belonged to his dissident organization were promptly arrested. A university professor told me fourteen engineering students were subsequently detained for sending another, milder protest letter to Castro himself. Students at the school protested the arrests by walking around campus with their heads bowed for three days, until the signers were released.

Cuba's Roman Catholic Church, which has historically been less popular than Santería, an Afro-Cuban folk religion, claims it is gaining a following among those weary of the system. Early this year, in seventy towns in Havana and Matanzas provinces, priests staged religious parades in honor of Cuba's national saint, La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre. These were the first non-official public gatherings authorized in years; thousands marched. Perhaps worried about what this might portend, Castro lashed out verbally at the Church hierarchy and has begun to back away from his invitation to the pope to visit Cuba in 1991.

Repression remains an essential component of the Castro survival strategy. To be sure, it is hard not to be impressed by the courage of those small human rights groups that do carry on in the tiny political space the government allows them. Gustavo Arcos, a gentlemanly former member of Castro's diplomatic corps who is now president of the Cuban Human Rights Committee, showed me the manual typewriter, made in 1945, on which his group must type all of its documents. He pointed to windows across the street from his crumbling Havana apartment house, where state security cameras record comings and goings at his house around the clock.

Nevertheless, one of Fidel's greatest political strengths is the weakness of his opponents. The dissidents are hampered by their own vague ideology, infighting, and a lack of charismatic leadership. Neither Arcos nor anyone else in Cuba quite measures up to Vaclav Havel or Lech Walesa. Unlike Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, where writers, artists, working-class leaders, and scientists kept up a network of clandestine resistance, civil society in Cuba seems atomized, drained by the flight of so many middle-class people to Miami years ago. "If I had to use one word to describe the Cuban people," a senior Roman Catholic official told me, "it would be fear. *We have no leaders.*"

In this sense, too, the proximity of the United States is a mixed blessing for internal opposition in Cuba: emigration, both legal and illegal, remains the first choice of many disaffected people and thus a safety valve for the regime. As of October 1, 1990, 367 Cubans, mostly young people, had floated to Florida aboard rubber tires, wooden rafts, and other precarious craft—a rough indication that Cubans would still rather face storms and sharks than the authorities in Cuba.

The prospects of revolt from within the Communist power structure seem no better, particularly in the wake of the Ochoa case. The trial led to wholesale purges in the government and state-security apparatus. The interior minister, José Abrahantes, a former Castro bodyguard who was in charge of Cuba's internal security and intelligence apparatus, was sentenced to twenty years in prison, and some 200 other high-ranking Interior Ministry officers were jailed, fired, or transferred. The Interior Ministry was put under the control of an army general loyal to Raúl Castro, as were the Transport Ministry and the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, which handle surveillance on the neighborhood level. All of these institutions are being revamped under Raúl's watchful eye. Fidel has tempered this crackdown with a call for ideas on "perfecting" socialism that will be debated at a Party congress next year. This is apparently designed to convince doubters that established channels can still respond to their beefs—and, in theory at least, it offers a potential mechanism under which Fidel could modify his plans without losing face. But with memories of Ochoa's fate still fresh, few are likely to test the limits.

In the languor of Havana's embassy patios, scenario-sketching is the parlor game of choice. The consensus is that the situation will drift and deteriorate for the foreseeable future, but that Castro will maintain control. He can wheel and deal to make up for some of the loss of Soviet help, the argument goes, and get a bit more mileage out of his strident nationalism. After all, he has already outlasted Eastern Europe's former leaders—and now can point to the problems that followed their downfall as an argument not to tamper with his system. For all its dependence on Soviet largess, and for all its copying of Soviet institutions, Castro's Cuba may have more in common politically with postcolonial one-party states such as Burma, North Korea, Vietnam, and China than it did with the former Communist regimes of Eastern Europe. Those countries have either suppressed or avoided the wave of democracy sweeping the world.

This makes a good deal of sense. But like all conventional wisdom, it is usually delivered with a sidelong glance and a sprinkling of to-be-sures. An economy going nowhere. Official corruption. Infighting in ruling circles. Desertions by the best and the brightest. Growing diplomatic isolation. Restless youth. An aging leader, surrounded by yes-men, who refuses any but the most cosmetic reforms. No one in Havana would swear to me this isn't exactly what it sounds like: the tick-tick-tick of a political time bomb. ●

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Wastelands

Harold Pinter's exquisite one-act play *A Kind of Alaska* was inspired by Oliver Sacks's book *Awakenings*. "Inspired," Pinter's word, is exactly right: his short play seems to lift off into silver and silence. A woman has been "asleep" for twenty-nine years—after encephalitis—and is brought round by the drug L-DOPA. Then, because the drug is not a cure, she floats back into immobile remoteness—in a long speech that is Pinter at his most haunting.

Now a film called **Awakenings** (Columbia) has been derived from Dr. Sacks's book. Doubtless it's unfair to compare the play and the film, but if you know the play, it's inevitable. The screenplay, by Steven Zaillian, shows almost nothing of Pinter's gift for making reality abstract, for sustaining action by means of rhythmic pause and lapidary diction. Also the play has the advantage of conciseness. But if we concede that the film must exist in different dimensions, including time, and that it had to take conventionally cinematic shape, then Zaillian's script looks honorably adequate.

He has leaned heavily on the formula of a young scientist trying to push forward despite the establishment. He has borrowed some flavors from *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*. He has splashed in a dollop of near-romance for the principal patient so that there would be some publicity stills with a pretty face. But within the somewhat standardized framework, Zaillian has treated the material respectfully and has written a number of moving scenes.

Robin Williams plays a doctor who has spent years in research and now—the time is 1969—needs another job. He has had little hands-on experience with patients and is hired reluctantly by a hospital in the Bronx that deals with the mentally incapacitated. Many of them are victims of the encephalitis epidemic that began in Europe in 1916-17 and swept the world in the 1920s. They are mute and virtually immobile, frozen in various stances. Williams is determined to crack the carapace of ice that surrounds these people.

When L-DOPA is discovered—the heroes who discovered it are not named—he persuades the hospital's chief to let him use it. In time all the post-encephalitic patients recover completely. What is not foreseen is that, in further time, the efficacy of the drug wears off. All the patients slip back into their previous state. The film's most terrible moment is when the principal patient, as he is receding into immobility, manages to say, "Learn from me. Learn from me." His plea becomes emblematic for our age, an appeal to science that goes beyond his particular affliction.

This man is the principal patient because the most attention is paid to him. Robert De Niro plays him. As Dustin Hoffman did with autism in *Rain Man*, De Niro has evidently studied the relevant symptoms and reproduces them chillingly. Where De Niro is not as good as he might be, or used to be, is in the "normal" weeks when he can speak and move and live more or less like anyone else. De Niro doesn't suggest a man who has lived through the experience of being shut in and shut off for decades. He's more like someone who has just come to after an anesthetic.

His mother, loyal and perceptive, is played by Ruth Nelson, who was one of the founding members of the Group Theater in 1930. (I saw her first in *Waiting for Lefty*, 1935.) She was always a good actress and has done nothing but grow. Here she makes a woman out of what might have been a stereotype.

John Heard enriches his role as the obstinate head of the hospital. Obviously there has to be some obstacle to Williams's ideas, or everything would proceed too smoothly. Zaillian tried to write the part as intelligent opposition, not a stock stuffy dolt, and Heard fulfills it.

Williams gives his best "straight" performance, shorn of all his marvelous manic vaudeville. The man he plays here is not a performer, which he was even in *Dead Poets Society*, but simply a man. There's some contradiction between the doctor's social isolation—he wants nothing in his life but his work—and Williams's busy chipmunk personality. But he has large reaches of sincerity in him, and he underpins this doctor with them.

Penny Marshall, who did a sturdy directing job with *Big*, does an even better job here. She cares for nothing but presenting her story straightforwardly, without tricks or adduced "style." And, quite obviously,

FILMS WORTH SEEING

C'est la Vie. *A French family's summer at the beach, viewed with insight into adult troubles and even greater insight into children. Diane Kurys wrote and directed. (Reviewed 12/3/90)* **Dances with Wolves.** *A Union Army officer, posted to the frontier, discovers Western space and Indian life. Kevin Costner stars and makes a noteworthy directing debut with this overlong but gorgeous saga. (12/10/90)* **Mr. and Mrs. Bridge.** *A conflation of Evan S. Connell's two novels about the Bridges, done with considerable appreciation of tone. Joanne Woodward is adequate as India; Paul Newman is not quite sufficiently finished as Walter. (12/24/90)* **Tilaï.** *In remote Burkina Faso, an almost Greek drama of broken promises and blood. Idrissa Ouedraogo, who made* Yaaba, *wrote and directed with genuine talent. (12/17/90)* —**SK**

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she knows how to work with actors.

A word for the producers, Walter F. Parkes and Lawrence Lasker. (Their best-known previous picture is *True Believer*, a well-wrought film of a few seasons back in which James Woods played a liberal lawyer.) The Oliver Sacks material might be a natural for TV; for a theater film, where the audience has to be induced to leave home, it was a much more risky venture. Parkes and Lasker took it on. They have made concessions to "heart"; but *Awakenings* conveys some sense of purpose past its accessible teary-eyed moments.

Bernardo Bertolucci's film **The Sheltering Sky** (Warner Bros.) is faithful to Paul Bowles's novel: it's equally vapid and pretentious. Bowles shoved an American couple through various adventures in North Africa, in city and town and desert, trying to make us believe that their experiences—including, of course, the sexual ones—dramatized Western malaise in search of primal truth. The effect is of a mannered pen pushing two puppets through a series of arrangements, rather than of people impelled even by unacknowledged angst. The book is a postwar dilution of Sartre's prewar masterpiece *Nausea*, laced with one of the worst aspects of Hemingway—travel snobbism. ("On the terrace of the Café d'Eckmühl-Noiseaux a few Arabs sat drinking mineral water." You're there in Tulsa, the author seems to say, but look where *I* am.)

The film gives us, in a way, even more Bowles. He does the voice-overs and is occasionally visible, closing the whole tedious affair with a particularly inane, pseudo-deep quotation.

Bertolucci was the ideal director for this *pâtisserie* of pretense. In *La Luna*, in *1900*, even in *The Last Emperor*, he managed to aerate the already vaporous, and he wastes no time here in laying on the desperate sadness of it all. One of the reasons we know it's desperately sad is that we see much pubic hair and a close-up of male genitals and considerable cunnilingus (which is mimicked mockingly by an Arab boy who spies on it). How could you show these things and not be profound?

As the husband who ends up dead of typhoid in the desert, John Malkovich is more at ease than he was in *Dangerous Liaisons*, and he gives the part some tissue of credibility. But his person is simply too commonplace to embody the anguish-of-the-age as he is supposed to.

That fine actress Debra Winger is his cool but sharp wife, who descends eventually to harem bondage and finds that she likes it. Winger has a capacity for emotional extremes, with no actorish self-esteem and usually with a slight comic edge. She pierces to the center of a moment, even when that moment is a kind of bemused numbness. She gives the picture its chief interest.

The cinematographer, Vittorio Storaro, emphasizes browns and sepia, rather than garish "Eastern" hues, which is a pleasant surprise. Bertolucci directs with much ostentatious camera hurtling that, I suppose, is meant to depict restlessness of the soul. ●

The Nobel lecture.

In Search of the Present

By Octavio Paz

I begin with two words that all men have uttered since the dawn of humanity: thank you. Grace is gratuitous; it is a gift. The person who receives it, the favored one, is grateful for it, and if he is not base, he expresses gratitude. That is what I do now, at this moment, with these weightless words. I hope my emotion compensates for their weightlessness. If each of my words were a drop of water, you would see through them and glimpse what I feel: gratitude, acknowledgment, and also an indefinable mixture of fear, respect, and surprise at finding myself here before you, in this place that is the home of both Swedish learning and world literature.

Languages are vast realities that transcend the political and historical entities that we call nations. The European languages that we speak in the Americas illustrate this. The special position of our literatures, when compared with the literatures of England, Spain, Portugal, and France, depends precisely on this fundamental fact: they are written in transplanted tongues. Languages are born in, and grow from, the native soil; they are nourished by a common history. Some of the European languages were rooted out from their native soil and their own tradition, however, and planted in an unknown and unnamed world. They took root in the new lands, and as they grew within the societies of America, they were transformed. They are the same plant, and yet a different one. Our literatures did not passively accept the changing fortunes of the transplanted languages; they participated in the process, even accelerated it. Soon they ceased to be merely trans-Atlantic reflections. At times, our literatures have been the negation of the literatures of Europe. More often, they have been a reply.

In spite of these oscillations, however, the link has never been broken. My classics are those of my language, and I consider myself a descendant of Lope de Vega and Quevedo, as any Spanish writer would. Yet I am not a Spaniard. I think that most writers of Spanish America, as well as those from the United States, Brazil, and Canada, would say the same about the English, Portuguese, and French traditions. To understand more clearly the special position of writers in the Americas, we might recall the dialogue that has been conducted by Japanese, Chinese, or Arabic writers with the different literatures of Europe. It is a dialogue that cuts across multiple languages and civilizations. Our dialogue, on the other hand, takes place within the same language. We are Europeans, yet we are not Europeans. What are we, then?

It is difficult to define what we are, but our works speak for us. In the field of literature, the great novelty of the present century has been the appearance of the American literatures. The first to appear was the English-speaking one, and then, in the second half of the twentieth century, the Latin American literature in its two great branches, Spanish America and Brazil. Although they are very different, these three literatures have a common feature: the conflict, which is more ideological than literary, between cosmopolitanism and nativism, between Europeanism and Americanism.

What is the legacy of this dispute? The polemics have disappeared; the works remain. Apart from this general resemblance, the differences between the three literatures are many and profound. One of them belongs more to history than to literature: the development of Anglo-American literature coincided with the rise of the United States as a world power, whereas the rise of our lit-

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erature coincides with our political and social misfortune, with the upheavals of our nations. This proves, once again, the limitations of social and historical determinism: the decline of empires and social disturbances sometimes coincide with moments of artistic and literary splendor. Li-Po and Tu Fu witnessed the fall of the Tang dynasty; Velázquez painted for Felipe IV; Seneca and Lucan were contemporaries and also victims of Nero.

The other differences are of a literary nature. They apply more to particular works than to the character of each literature. But can we say that literatures have a character? Do they possess a set of shared features that distinguish them from other literatures? I doubt it. A literature is not defined by some fanciful, intangible character; it is a society of unique works, which is united by relations of opposition and affinity.

The first fundamental difference between Latin-American literature and Anglo-American literature lies in the diversity of their origins. Both began as projections of Europe—in the case of North America, the projection of an island; in our case, the projection of a peninsula. The two regions are geographically, historically, and culturally eccentric. The origins of North America are in England and the Reformation; ours are in Spain, Portugal, and the Counter-Reformation. About the case of Spanish America, I should briefly mention what distinguishes Spain from other European countries, giving it a particularly original historical identity. Spain is no less eccentric than England, but its eccentricity is of a different kind. The eccentricity of the English is insular, and is characterized by isolation: it is an eccentricity that excludes. Hispanic eccentricity is peninsular, by contrast, and consists of the coexistence of different civilizations and different pasts. It is an inclusive eccentricity. In what would later be Catholic Spain, the Visigoths professed the heresy of Arianism, and we might note also the centuries of domination by Arabic civilization, the influence of Jewish culture, the Reconquest, and other characteristic features of Spanish history.

Hispanic eccentricity was reproduced and multiplied in America, especially in countries such as Mexico and Peru, where ancient and splendid civilizations had existed. In Mexico the Spaniards encountered history as well as geography. That history is still alive; it is a present rather than a past. The temples and gods of pre-Columbian Mexico are a pile of ruins, but the spirit that breathed life into that world has not disappeared. It speaks to us in the hermetic language of myth, legend, forms of social coexistence, popular art, customs. Being a Mexican writer means listening to the voice of that present, that presence. Listening to it, speaking with it, deciphering it, expressing it.

Perhaps we may now perceive more clearly the peculiar relation that binds us to, and separates us from, the European tradition. This consciousness of being separate is a constant feature of our spiritual history. Separation is sometimes experienced as a wound that marks an internal division, as an anguished awareness that invites self-examination. At other times it is a challenge, a spur that incites us to action, to go forth and encounter others and the outside world.

It is true that the feeling of separation is universal, not peculiar to Spanish Americans. It is born at the moment of our birth: as we are wrenched from the Whole, we fall into an alien land. This experience becomes a wound that never heals. It is the unfathomable depth of every man; all our ventures and exploits, all our acts and dreams, are bridges designed to overcome the separation and reunite us with the world and our fellow beings. Each man's life, and the collective history of mankind, can be seen as an attempt to reconstruct the original situation. An unfinished and endless cure for our divided condition. But it is not my intention to provide yet another description of this feeling. I wish simply to stress that for us this existential condition expresses itself in historical terms. It becomes an awareness of our history.

How and when does this feeling appear, and how is it transformed into consciousness? The reply to this double-edged question can be given in the form of theory or in the form of personal testimony. I prefer the latter: there are many theories, and none is entirely convincing. The feeling of separation is bound up with the oldest and vaguest of my memories: the first cry, the first scare. Like every child, I built emotional bridges in the imagination to link me to the world and to other people. I lived in a town on the outskirts of Mexico City, in an old dilapidated house that had a jungle-like garden and a great room full of books. First games and first lessons. The garden soon became the center of my world; the library, an enchanted cave. I used to read and play with my cousins and schoolmates. There was a fig tree, a temple of vegetation; and four pine trees, three ash trees, a nightshade, a pomegranate tree, wild grass, and prickly plants that produced purple grazes. Adobe walls. Time was elastic, space was a spinning wheel.

All time, past or future, real or imaginary, was pure presence. Space transformed itself ceaselessly. The beyond was here, all was here: a valley, a mountain, a distant country, the neighbors' patio. Books with pictures, especially history books, eagerly leafed through, supplied images of deserts and jungles, palaces and hovels, warriors and princesses, beggars and kings. We were shipwrecked with Sinbad and Crusoe, we fought with D'Artagnan, we took Valencia with the Cid. How I would have liked to stay forever on the Isle of Calypso! In summer the green branches of the fig tree would sway like the sails of a caravel or a pirate ship. High up on the mast, swept by the wind, I could make out islands and continents, lands that vanished as soon as they became tangible. The world was limitless, yet it was always within reach; time was a pliable substance that weaved an unbroken present.

When was the spell broken? Gradually, rather than suddenly. It is hard to accept that a friend has betrayed you, that a woman you love has deceived you, that the idea of freedom is the mask of a tyrant. What we call "finding out" is a slow and tricky process, because we ourselves are the accomplices of our errors and our deceptions. Still, I can remember rather clearly an incident that was the first sign, though it was quickly forgotten. I must have been about six when one of my cousins, who was a little older, showed me a North American magazine with a photograph of soldiers marching along a huge avenue, probably in New York. "They've returned from the war," she said. This handful of words disturbed me, as if they foreshadowed the end of the world, or the Second Coming of Christ. I vaguely knew that somewhere far away a war had ended a few years earlier, and that the soldiers were marching to celebrate their victory. That war had taken place, however, in another place and in another time, not here and now. The photograph refuted me. I felt literally dislodged from the present.

From that moment, time began to fracture. And there appeared a plurality of spaces. The experience repeated itself more and more frequently. Any piece of news, a harmless phrase, a headline in a newspaper: everything proved the outside world's existence, and my own unreality. I felt that the world was splitting, that I did not inhabit the present. Real time was elsewhere. My time, the time of the garden, the fig tree, the games with friends, the drowsiness among the plants under the afternoon sun, a fig torn open (black and

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red like a live coal, but sweet and fresh): this was a fictitious time. In spite of what my senses told me, the time from over there, that belonged to the others, was the real one, the time of the real present. I accepted the inevitable. I became an adult.

That was how my expulsion from the present began. It may seem paradoxical to say that we have been expelled from the present, but it is a feeling we have all known. Some of us experienced it first as a punishment that we later transformed into consciousness and action. The search for the present is the pursuit neither of an earthly paradise nor of a timeless eternity; it is the search for a real reality. For us, as Spanish Americans, the real present was not in our own countries. It was the time lived by others, by the English, the French, the Germans. It was the time of New York, Paris, London. We had to go and look for it and bring it back home. Those were the years of my discovery of literature.

I began to write poems. I did not know what made me write them; I was moved by an inner need that is difficult to define. Only now have I understood that there was a secret relationship between my expulsion from the present and my writing of poetry. Poetry is in love with the instant, and seeks to relive it in the poem. Thus it separates the instant from sequential time and transforms it into a fixed present. In those years, though, I wrote without wondering why I was doing it. I was searching for the gateway to the present; I wanted to belong to my time and to my century. A little later this obsession became a fixed idea: I wanted to be a modern poet. My search for modernity had begun.

Modernity is an ambiguous term. There are as many types of modernity as there are societies. Each has its own. The word's meaning is uncertain and arbitrary, like the name of the period that preceded it, the Middle Ages. If we are modern compared with medieval times, are we the Middle Ages of a future modernity? Is a name that changes with time a real name? Modernity is a word in search of its meaning. Is it an idea, a mirage, or a moment of history? Are we the children of modernity or its creators? Nobody knows for sure. It doesn't matter much: we follow it, we pursue it. For me, in those early years as a writer, modernity was fused with the present, or rather produced it: the present was its final supreme flower.

My case was not exceptional. Since the Symbolist period, modern poets have chased after that magnetic and elusive figure that fascinates them. Baudelaire was the first. He was also the first to touch her, to discover that she is nothing but time that crumbles in one's hands. I am not going to relate my adventures in pursuit of modernity; they are not very different from those of other twentieth-century poets. Modernity has been a universal passion. Since 1850 she has been our goddess and our demoness. In recent years there has been an attempt to exorcise her with talk of "postmodernism." But what is postmodernism, if not a more modern modernity?

For us, as Latin Americans, the search for poetic modernity runs historically parallel to the repeated attempts to modernize our countries. This tendency began at the end of the eighteenth century, and it included Spain, too. The United States was born into modernity, and by 1830 it was already, as Tocqueville observed, the womb of the future; but we were born at a moment when Spain and Portugal were moving away from modernity. That is why there was frequent talk of "Europeanizing" our countries: the modern was outside, it had to be imported.

In Mexican history, this process began just before the War of Independence. Later it became a great ideological and political debate that passionately divided Mexican society throughout the nineteenth century. One event was to call into question not the legitimacy of the reform movement, but the way in which it had been implemented: the Mexican Revolution. Unlike its twentieth-century counterparts, the Mexican Revolution was not really the expression of a vaguely utopian ideology. It was, rather, the explosion of a reality that had been historically and psychologically repressed. It was not the work of a group of ideologists intent on introducing principles derived from a political theory, but a popular uprising that unmasked what was hidden. For this reason, it was more of a revelation than a revolution. Mexico was searching for the present outside only to find it within, buried but alive. The search for modernity led us to discover our antiquity, the hidden face of the nation. I am not sure that this unexpected historical lesson has been learned by all—that between tradition and modernity there is a bridge. When they are mutually isolated, tradition stagnates and modernity vaporizes. When they are joined, modernity breathes life into tradition, while the latter responds with depth and gravity.

The search for poetic modernity was a Quest, in the allegorical and chivalric sense that this word had in the twelfth century. I did not find any Grail, although I did cross several wastelands, visiting castles of mirrors and camping among ghostly tribes. Still, I discovered the modern tradition. For modernity is not a poetic school, it is a lineage, a family dispersed over several continents, which for two centuries has survived many changes and misfortunes: indifference, isolation, and tribunals in the name of religious, political, academic, and sexual orthodoxy. Because it is a tradition and not a doctrine, it has been able to survive and to change at the same time. This is also why it is so diverse: each poetic adventure is distinct, each poet has sown a different plant in the miraculous forest of speaking trees.

If the works are diverse and each route is distinct, what is it that unites all these poets? Not an aesthetic, but a search. My own search was not fanciful, even though the idea of modernity is a mirage, a bundle of reflections. One day I discovered that I was returning to the starting point instead of advancing, that the search for modernity was a descent to the origins. Modernity led me to the source of my beginning, to my antiquity. Separation became reconciliation. Thus I discovered that the poet is a pulse in the rhythmic flow of generations.

The idea of modernity is a byproduct of our conception of history as a unique and linear process of succession. The origins of this conception are in the Judeo-Christian tradition, but it breaks with Christian doctrine. In Christianity, the cyclical time of pagan cultures is supplanted by unrepeatable history, which has a beginning and will have an end. Sequential time was the profane time of history, an arena for the actions of fallen men, yet still governed by a sacred time that had neither a beginning nor an end. And after Judgment Day, there will be no future either in heaven or in hell. In the realm of eternity there is no succession, because everything *is*. Being triumphs over becoming.

The new time, our concept of time, is linear like that of Christianity, but it is open to infinity, it makes no reference to Eternity. Ours is the time of profane history, an irreversible and perpetually unfinished time that marches toward the future and not toward its end. History's sun is the future. Progress is the name of this movement toward the future.

Christians see the world, or what used to be called the *seculum* or worldly life, as a place of trial: in this world, souls can be lost or saved. In the new conception, by contrast, the historical subject is not the individual soul but

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the human race, sometimes viewed as a whole and sometimes through a chosen group that represents it: the developed nations of the West, the proletariat, the white race, or some other entity. The pagan and Christian philosophical tradition had exalted Being as changeless perfection overflowing with plenitude, but we adore change; it is the motor of progress and the model for our societies. Change articulates itself in two ways, as evolution and revolution. The trot and the leap. Modernity is the spearhead of historical movement, the incarnation of evolution or revolution, the two faces of progress. And progress takes place by means of the dual action of science and technology, applied to the realm of nature and to the use of her immense resources.

Modern man has defined himself as a historical being. Other societies chose to define themselves in terms of values and ideas different from change: the Greeks venerated the *polis* and the circle, yet they were unaware of progress. Like all the Stoics, Seneca was much exercised by the eternal return; St. Augustine believed that the end of the world was imminent; St. Thomas constructed a scale of being, linking the smallest creature to the Creator; and so on. One after the other, these ideas and beliefs were abandoned. It seems to me that the same decline is beginning to affect our idea of Progress—and, as a result, our vision of time, of history, of ourselves. We are witnessing the twilight of the future.

The decline of the idea of modernity, and the popularity of a notion as dubious as "postmodernism," are phenomena that affect not only literature and the arts. We are experiencing the crisis of the essential ideas and beliefs that have guided mankind for over two centuries. First, the concept of a process open to infinity and synonymous with endless progress has been called into question. I need hardly mention what everybody knows: that the resources of nature are finite and will run out one day. We have inflicted what may be irreparable damage on the natural environment and our own species is endangered. Science and technology, the instruments of progress, have shown with alarming clarity that they can easily become destructive forces. The existence of nuclear weapons is a refutation of the idea that progress is inherent in history—a refutation that can only be called devastating.

Second, we must reckon with the fate of the historical subject, mankind, in the twentieth century. Seldom have nations or individuals suffered so much: two world wars, tyrannies spread over five continents, the atom bomb, the proliferation of one of the cruelest and most lethal institutions known to man: the concentration camp. Modern technology has provided countless benefits, to be sure, but it is impossible to close our eyes to slaughter, torture, humiliation, degradation, and all the other wrongs inflicted on millions of innocent people in our century.

And third, the belief in the necessity of progress has been shaken. For our grandparents and our parents, the ruins of history—the spectacle of corpses, desolate battlefields, devastated cities—did not invalidate the underlying goodness of the historical process. The scaffolds and tyrannies, the conflicts and savage civil wars, were the price to be paid for progress, the blood money to be offered to the god of history. A god? Yes, reason itself was deified and was prodigal in cruel acts of cunning, according to Hegel. But now the alleged rationality of history has vanished. And in the very domain of order, regularity, and coherence (in pure sciences like physics), the old notions of accident and catastrophe have reappeared. This disturbing resurrection reminds me of the terrors that marked the advent of the millennium, of the anguish of the Aztecs at the end of each cosmic cycle.

The last in this hasty enumeration of the elements of our crisis marks the collapse of all the philosophical and historical hypotheses that claimed to reveal the laws governing the course of history. The believers, confident that they held the keys to history, erected powerful states over pyramids of corpses. These arrogant constructions, destined in theory to liberate men, were quickly transformed into gigantic prisons. Today we have seen them fall, overthrown not by their ideological enemies, but by the impatience and the desire for freedom of the new generations. Is this the end of all utopias? It is, more precisely, the end of the idea of history as a phenomenon whose outcome can be known in advance. Historical determinism has been a costly and bloodstained fantasy. History is unpredictable, because its agent, mankind, is the personification of indeterminacy.

Thus we are very probably at the end of one historical period and at the beginning of another. The end of the Modern Age, or just a mutation? It is difficult to tell. In any case, the collapse of utopian schemes has left a great void, not in the countries where this ideology has been proved to have failed, but in those countries where many embraced it with enthusiasm and hope. For the first time in history, mankind lives in a sort of spiritual wilderness, no longer in the shadow of the religious and political systems that consoled us even as they oppressed us. All societies are historical, but every society has lived under the guidance and the inspiration of a set of metahistorical beliefs and ideas. Ours is the first age that is ready to live without a metahistorical doctrine.

Whether they be religious or philosophical, moral or aesthetic, our absolutes are not collective, they are private. This is a dangerous experience. It is also impossible to know whether the tensions and the conflicts unleashed in this privatization of ideas, practices, and beliefs that belonged traditionally to the public domain will end up destroying the social fabric. Men could become possessed once more by ancient religious fury or by fanatical nationalism. It would be terrible if the fall of the abstract idol of ideology were to foreshadow the resurrection of the buried passions of tribes, sects, and churches. The signs, unfortunately, are disturbing.

The decline of the ideologists whom I have called metahistorical, by which I mean those that assign to history a goal and a direction, implies a tacit abandonment of global solutions. With good sense, we tend more and more toward limited remedies for concrete problems. It is prudent to abstain from legislating about the future. Still, the present requires much more than attention to its immediate needs. It demands a more rigorous global reflection. For a long time I have firmly believed that the twilight of the future heralds the advent of the now. And to think about the now requires, first of all, a recovery of critical vision. For example: the triumph of the market economy (a triumph that is owed to its adversary's default) cannot be only a cause for joy. As a mechanism the market is efficient, but like all mechanisms it lacks conscience and compassion. We must find a way of integrating it into society so that it expresses the social contract and becomes an instrument of justice and fairness. The advanced democratic societies have reached an enviable level of prosperity, but at the same time they are islands of abundance in the ocean of universal misery.

The question of the market is intricately related to the deterioration of the environment. Pollution affects not only the air, the rivers, and the forests, it also affects our souls. A society possessed by the frantic need to produce more in order to consume more tends to reduce ideas, feelings, art, love, friendship, and

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people themselves to consumer products. Everything becomes a thing to be bought, used, and thrown on the rubbish heap. No other society has produced so much waste, material and moral, as ours.

Reflecting on the now does not imply relinquishing the future or forgetting the past: the present is the meeting place for the three directions of time. Neither can it be confused with facile hedonism. The tree of pleasure does not grow in the past or in the future, but at this very moment. Yet death is also a fruit of the present. It cannot be denied, for it, too, is a part of life. Living well implies dying well. We have to learn to look death in the face. The present is alternately luminous and somber, like a sphere that unites the two halves of action and contemplation. Thus, just as we have had philosophies of the past and of the future, of eternity and of the void, we shall have a philosophy of the present. The poetic experience could be one of its foundations. What do we know about the present? Nothing, or almost nothing. Yet the poets do know at least one thing: that the present is the source of presences.

In my pilgrimage in search of modernity, I lost my way in many places, only to find myself again. I returned to the source and discovered that modernity is not outside us, but within us. It is today and the most ancient antiquity; it is tomorrow and the beginning of the world; it is a thousand years old and newborn. It speaks in Nahuatl, draws Chinese ideograms from the ninth century, appears on the television screen. This intact present, recently unearthed, shakes off the dust of centuries, smiles, and suddenly starts to fly, disappearing through the window. A simultaneous plurality of time and presence: modernity breaks with the immediate past only to recover an age-old past, and to transform a tiny fertility figure from the Neolithic age into our contemporary.

We pursue modernity in her incessant metamorphoses, but we never trap her. She always escapes; each encounter ends in flight. We embrace her, and she disappears immediately: it was just a little air. It is the instant, that bird that is everywhere and nowhere. We want to capture it alive, but it flaps its wings and vanishes in the form of a handful of syllables. We are left empty-handed. And then the doors of perception open slightly and the other time appears, the real time, the one that we were searching for without knowing it: the present, the presence.

—translated by Anthony Stanton

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Checks, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.

Life in the Stone Age

By Louis Menand

I.

If you advised a college student today to tune in, turn on, and drop out, he would probably call campus security. Few things sound less glamorous in 1991 than "the counterculture"—a term many people are likely to associate with Charles Manson. Writing about that period now feels a little like rummaging around in history's dustbin. Just twenty years ago, though, everyone was writing about the counterculture, for everyone thought that the American middle class would never be the same.

Rolling Stone Magazine: The Uncensored History
by Robert Draper
(Doubleday, 389 pp., $19.95)

Songs of the Doomed: More Notes on the Death of the American Dream Gonzo Papers: Volume 3
by Hunter S. Thompson
(Summit Books, 315 pp., $21.95)

Blown Away: The Rolling Stones and the Death of the Sixties
by A. E. Hotchner
(Simon and Schuster, 349 pp., $21.95)

Stone Alone: The Story of a Rock 'n' Roll Band
by Bill Wyman, with Ray Coleman
(Viking, 594 pp., $22.95)

The American middle class never is the same for very long, of course; it's much too insecure to resist a new self-conception when one is offered. But the change that the counterculture made in American life has become nearly impossible to calculate—thanks partly to the exaggerations of people who hate the '60s, and partly to the exaggerations of people who hate the people who hate the '60s. The subject could use the attention of some people who really don't care.

The difficulties begin with the word "counterculture" itself. Though it has been from the beginning the name for the particular style of sentimental radicalism that flourished briefly in the late 1960s, it's a little misleading. For during those years the counterculture *was* culture—or the prime object of the culture's attention, which in America is pretty much the same thing—and that is really the basis of its interest. It had all the attributes of a typical mass culture episode: it was a lifestyle that could be practiced on weekends; it came into fashion when the media discovered it and went out of fashion when the media lost interest; and it was, from the moment it penetrated the middle class, thoroughly commercialized. Its failure to grasp this last fact about itself is the essence of its sentimentalism.

The essence of its radicalism is a little more complicated. The general idea was the rejection of the norms of adult middle-class life; but the rejection was made in a profoundly middle-class spirit. Middle-class Americans are a driven, pampered, puritanical, and self-indulgent group of people. Before the '60s these contradictions were rationalized by the principle of deferred gratification: you exercised self-discipline in order to gain entrance to a profession, you showed deference to those above you on the career ladder, and material rewards followed and could be enjoyed more or less promiscuously.

The counterculture alternative looked to many people like simple hedonism: sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll (with instant social justice on the side). But the counterculture wasn't hedonistic; it was puritanical. It was, in fact, virtually Hebraic: the parents were worshiping false gods, and the students who tore up (or dropped out of) the university in an apparent frenzy of self-destructiveness—for wasn't the university their gateway to the good life?—were, in effect, smashing the golden calf.

There was a fair amount of flagrant sensual gratification, all of it crucial to the pop culture appeal of the whole business; but it is a mistake to characterize the pleasure-taking as amoral. It is only "fun" to stand in the rain for three days with a hundred thousand chemically demented people, listening to interminable and inescapable loud music and wondering if you'll ever see your car again, if you also believe in some inchoate way

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that you are participating in the creation of the New World.

The name of the new god was authenticity, and it was unmistakably the jealous type. It demanded an existence of programmatic hostility to the ordinary modes of middle-class life, and even to the ordinary modes of consciousness—to whatever was mediated, accommodationist, materialistic, and, even trivially, false. Like most of the temporary gods of the secular society, the principle of authenticity was merely paid lip service to by most of the people who flocked to its altar, and when the '60s were over, those people went happily off to other shrines. But there were some people who took the principle to heart, who flagellated their consciences in its service, and who, even after the '60s had passed, continued to obsess about being "co-opted."

There are two places in American society where this strain of puritanism persists. One is the academy, with its fetish of the unconditioned. The other is the high end of pop music criticism—the kind of criticism that complains, for instance, about the commercialism of MTV. Since pop music is by definition commercial, it may be hard to see how pop music commercialism can ever be a problem. But for many people who take pop music seriously it is *the* problem, and its history essentially begins with *Rolling Stone.*

II.

Rolling Stone was born in the semi-idyllic, semi-hysterical atmosphere of northern California in the late '60s, an atmosphere that Robert Draper's entertaining history of the magazine does an excellent job re-creating. His book is filled with vivid sketches of many of the classic period types who passed through *Rolling Stone*'s offices and pages during the years the magazine was published in San Francisco—from 1967 until 1977, when it was moved to New York.

The theme that Draper has selected to tie the story together, though, is the standard history-of-the-'60s theme of selling out. He chooses to illustrate it by making Jann Wenner, the magazine's founder and still its editor and publisher, both the hero and the villain of the tale—the man who seized the moment and then betrayed it. This threatens to make Wenner a little more complicated than he actually is. An opportunistic, sentimental, shrewd celebrity-hound, Wenner was the first person in journalism to see what people in the music business already knew, and what people in the advertising business would soon realize: that rock music had become a fixture of American middle-class life. It had created a market.

Wenner knew this because he was himself the prototypical fan. He was born in 1946, in the first wave of the baby boom—his father would make a fortune selling baby formula for the children to whom the son later sold magazines—and he started *Rolling Stone* (he is supposed to have said) in order to meet John Lennon. He met Lennon; and he met and made pals with many more of his generation's entertainment idols—who, once they had become friends, and with or without editorial justification, turned up regularly on the covers of his magazine. Wenner was not looking for celebrity himself; he was only, like most Americans, a shameless worshiper of the stars. "I always felt Jann had a real fan's mentality," one of his friends and associates, William Randolph Hearst III, explained. "He wanted to hang out with Mick Jagger because Mick was cool, not because he wanted to tell people that *he* was cool as a result of knowing Mick."

The person who thinks Mick is cool is the perfect person to run a magazine devoted to serious fandom. But he is an obvious liability at a magazine devoted to serious criticism. Wenner was not a devotee of the authentic, not even a hypocritical one. He was a hustler: he believed in show biz, and saw, for instance, nothing unethical about altering a review to please a record company he hoped to have as an advertiser. "We're gonna be better than *Billboard*!" is the sort of thing he would say to encourage his staff when morale was low.

Morale was not thereby improved. For the people who produced Wenner's magazine took the '60s much more seriously than Wenner did. It wasn't merely that, like many editors, Wenner demonstrated a rude indifference to the rhythms of magazine production, commissioning new covers at the last minute and that sort of thing. It was that he didn't seem to grasp the world-historical significance of the movement that his magazine was spearheading. "Here we were," Jon Carroll, a former staffer, told Draper, "believing we were involved in the greatest cultural revolution since the sack of Rome. And he was running around with starlets. We thought that Jann was the most trivial sort of fool."

Draper's view is an only slightly less inflated version of Carroll's view. "Quite correctly," he writes of the early years, "the employees of *Rolling Stone* magazine saw themselves as leaders and tastemakers—the best minds of their generation." *Rolling Stone* covered the whole of the youth culture—though it generally steered clear, at Wenner's insistence, of radical politics. ("Get back," Wenner pleaded with his editors in 1970, after the shootings at Kent State inspired them to try to "detrivialize" the magazine, "get back to where you once belonged.") But the backbone of the magazine has always been its music criticism, and its special achievement is that it provided an arena for the development of the lyrical, pedantic, and hyperbolical writing about popular music that is part of the '60s' literary legacy. *Rolling Stone* wasn't the only place where this style of criticism flourished, but it was the biggest. *Rolling Stone* institutionalized the genre.

This is what Draper responds to in the magazine, and where his sympathies as a historian lie. His principal sources are from the editorial side of the magazine, because that is his principal interest. He tells us at some length about the editorial staff's travails, but gives a perfunctory account, as though he found it too distasteful to investigate, of, for example, the business staff's "Marketing through Music" campaign—a newsletter for "Marketing, Advertising, and Music Executives," circulated in the mid-'80s, that encouraged corporate sponsorship of rock concerts and the use of rock stars and rock songs in advertising. The business deals are here, but they are generally treated from the outside, and always as inimical to the true spirit of the magazine.

From the point of view of social history, though, "Marketing through Music" is the interesting part of the story. For rock music, like every other mass-market commodity, is about making money. Everyone who writes about popular music knows that before Sam Phillips, the proprietor of Sun Records, recorded Elvis Presley in 1954, he used to go around saying, "If I could find a white boy who could sing like a nigger, I could make a million dollars." But Elvis himself is somehow imagined to have had nothing to do with this sort of gross commercial calculation, and when Albert Goldman's biography appeared in 1981 and described Presley as a musically incurious and manipulative pop star, the rock critical establishment descended on Goldman in wrath.

All rock stars want to make money, and for the same reasons everyone else in a liberal society wants to make money: more toys and more autonomy. Bill Wyman, when he went off to become The Rolling Stones' bass player, told his mother that he'd only have to wear his hair long for a few years, and he'd get a nice house and a car out of it at the end. Even The Doors, quintessential late-'60s performers who thought they were mak-

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ing an Important Musical Statement, began when Jim Morrison ran into Ray Manzarek, who became the group's keyboards player, and recited some poetry he'd written. "I said that's it," Manzarek later explained. "It seemed as though, if we got a group together we could make a million dollars." Ray, meet Sam.

Pop stars aren't simply selling a sound; they're selling an image, and one reason the stars of the '60s made such an effective appeal to middle-class taste is because their images went, so to speak, all the way through. Their stage personalities were understood to be continuous with their offstage personalities—an impression enhanced by the fact that, in a departure from Tin Pan Alley tradition, most '60s performers wrote their own material. But the images, too, were carefully managed.

The Beatles, for example, were the children of working-class families; they were what the average suburban teenager would consider tough characters. Their breakthrough into mainstream popular music came when their manager, Brian Epstein, transformed them into four cheeky but lovable lads, an image that delighted the middle class. The Rolling Stones, apart from Wyman, were much more middle class. Mick Jagger attended (on scholarship) the London School of Economics; his girlfriend Marianne Faithfull, herself a pop performer, was the daughter of a professor of Renaissance literature. Brian Jones's father was an aeronautical engineer, and Jones, who founded the band, had what was virtually an intellectual's interest in music. He wrote articles for *Jazz News*, for instance, something one cannot imagine a Beatle doing. But when it became The Stones' turn to enter the mainstream, the lovable image was already being used in a way that looked unbeatable. So (as Wyman quite matter-of-factly describes it in his appealing memoir) *their* manager, Andrew Oldham, cast them as rude boys, which delighted middle-class teenagers in a different and even more thrilling way.

These images enjoyed long-term success in part because they suited the performers' natural talents and temperaments. But it is pointless to think of scrutinizing them by the lights of authenticity. One reason popular culture gives pleasure is that it relieves us of this whole anxiety of trying to determine whether what we're enjoying is real or fake. Mediation is the sine qua non of the experience. Authenticity is a high culture problem.

Unless, of course, you're trying to run a cultural revolution. In which case you will need to think that there is some essential relation between the unadulterated spirit of rock 'n' roll and personal and social liberation. "The magic's in the music," The Lovin' Spoonful used to sing. "Believe in the magic, it will set you free." The Lovin' Spoonful was a self-promoting, teenybopper band if there ever was one; but those lyrics turn up frequently in Draper's book. For they (or some intellectually enriched version of them) constitute the credo of the higher rock criticism.

The central difficulty faced by the serious pop exegete is to explain how it is that a band with a manager and a promoter and sales of millions of records that plays "Satisfaction" is less calculating than a band with a manager and a promoter and sales of millions of records that plays "Itchycoo Park" (assuming, perhaps unadvisedly, that a case cannot be made for "Itchycoo Park"). Theorizing about the difference can produce nonsense of an unusual transparency. "Rock is a mass-produced music that carries a critique of its own means of production," explained the British pop music sociologist Simon Frith in *Sound Effects* (1981); "it is a mass-consumed music that constructs its own 'authentic' audience." To which all one can say is that when you have to put the word "authentic" in quotation marks, you're in trouble.

The problem is more simply solved by reference to a pop music genealogy that was invented in the late '60s and that has been embraced by nearly everyone in the business ever since—by the musicians, by the industry, and by the press. This is the notion that genuine rock 'n' roll is the direct descendant of the blues, a music whose authenticity it would be a sacrilege to question.

The historical scheme according to which the blues begat rhythm and blues, which begat rockabilly, which begat Elvis, who (big evolutionary leap here) gave us The Beatles, was canonized by *Rolling Stone*. It is the basis for *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll* (1976), edited by Jim Miller, which is one of the best collections of classic rock criticism; and it's the basis for *Rock of Ages: The Rolling Stone History of Rock & Roll* (1986) by Ed Ward, Geoffrey Stokes, and Ken Tucker, which reads a little bit like the kind of thing you would get if you put three men in a room with some typewriters and a stack of paper and told them they couldn't come out until they had written *The Rolling Stone History of Rock & Roll*.

All genealogies are suspect, since they have an inherent bias against contingency, and genealogies to which critics and their subjects subscribe with equal enthusiasm are doubly suspect. The idea that rock 'n' roll is simply a style of popular music, and that there was popular music before rock 'n' roll (and not produced by black men) that might have some relation to, say, "Yesterday" or "Wild Horses" or "Sad-Eyed Lady of the Lowlands"—songs that do not exactly call Chuck Berry to mind, let alone Muddy Waters—is largely unknown to rock criticism.

The reason that the link between Elvis Presley and The Beatles feels so strained is because we are really talking about the difference between party music for teenagers and pop anthems for the middle-class—between music to jump up and down by and music with a bit of a brow. Even the music to jump up and down by is a long way from the blues: adolescents from Great Neck did not go into hysterics in the presence of Blind Lemon Jefferson. An entertainment phenomenon like Mick Jagger, with his mysteriously acquired cockney-boy-from-Memphis accent, surely has as much relation to a white teen-idol like the young Frank Sinatra as he does to a black bluesman like Robert Johnson. Except that Robert Johnson is the real thing. Of course some of the music of Jagger and Richards and Lennon and McCartney appropriated the sound of black rhythm and blues: that's precisely the least indigenous and least authentic thing about it.

This is not to say that rock 'n' roll (or the music of Frank Sinatra, for that matter) doesn't come from real feeling and doesn't touch real feeling. And it's not to say that there aren't legitimate distinctions to be made among degrees of sham in popular music. When one is discussing Percy Faith's 1975 disco version of "Hava Nagilah," it is appropriate to use the term "inauthentic." But the wider the appeal a popular song has, the more zealously it resists the terms of art. The most affecting song of the 1960s was (let's say) the version of "With a Little Help from My Friends" that Joe Cocker sang at Woodstock on August 17, 1969—an imitation British music-hall number performed in upstate New York by a white man from Sheffield pretending to be Ray Charles. On that day, probably nothing would have sounded more genuine.

III.

Spiro Agnew thought that the helpful friends were drugs, which is a reminder that the counterculture was indeed defining itself against something. The customary reply to a charge like Agnew's

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was that he was mistaking a gentle celebration of togetherness for a threat against the established order—that he was, in '60s language, being uptight. Agnew's attacks were ignorant and cynical enough; but the responses, though from people understandably a little uptight themselves, were disingenuous. Few teenagers in 1967 thought that the line "I get high with a little help from my friends" was an allusion to the exhilaration of good conversation. "I get high" is a pretty harmless drug reference. But it is a drug reference.

The classic case of this sort of thing is "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," also on the *Sgt. Pepper's* album. When the press got the idea that the title encrypted the initials LSD, John Lennon, who had written the song, expressed outrage. "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," he allowed, was the name his little boy had given a drawing he had made at school and brought home to show his father; and this bit of lore has been attached to the history of *Sgt. Pepper's* to indicate how hysterically hostile the old culture was to the new. No doubt the story about the drawing is true. On the other hand, if "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" is not a song about an acid trip, it is hard to know what sort of song it is.

Drugs were integral to '60s rock 'n' roll culture in three ways. The most publicized way, and the least interesting, has to do with the conspicuous consumption of drugs by rock 'n' roll performers, a subject that has been written about interminably, A. E. Hotchner's overheated book on The Rolling Stones being one recent specimen among many. Lennon eating LSD as though it were candy, Keith Richards undergoing complete blood transfusions in an effort to cure himself of heroin addiction ("How do you like my new blood?" he would ask his friends after a treatment)—these are stories of mainly tabloid interest, though they are important to rock 'n' roll mythology since addiction and early death are part of jazz and blues mythology as well.

The drug consumption was real enough (though one doesn't see it mentioned that since the body builds a resistance to hallucinogens, it is not surprising that Lennon ate acid like candy: he couldn't have been getting much of a kick from it after a while). Some people famously died of drug abuse; many others destroyed their careers and their lives. But overindulgence is a hazard of all celebrity; it's part of the modern culture of fame. That rock 'n' roll musicians overindulged with drugs is not, historically, an especially notable phenomenon.

Then there are the references to drugs in the songs themselves. Sometimes the references were fairly obscure: "Light My Fire," for instance, the title of The Doors' biggest hit, was a phrase taken from an Aldous Huxley piece in praise of mescaline. Sometimes the references were overt (Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit," or The Velvet Underground's "Heroin"). Most often, though, it was simply understood that the song was describing or imitating a drug experience: "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," "Strawberry Fields," "Mr. Tambourine Man," "A Whiter Shade of Pale."

The message (such as it was) of these songs usually involved the standard business about "consciousness expansion" already being purveyed by gurus like Allen Ginsberg and Alan Watts: once you have (with whatever assistance) stepped beyond the veil, you will prefer making love to making war, and so forth. Sometimes there was the suggestion that drugs open your eyes to the horror of things as they are—an adventure for the spiritually fortified only. ("Reality is for people who can't face drugs," as Tom Waits used to say.) The famous line in The Beatles' "A Day in the Life" was meant to catch both senses: "I'd love to turn you on." It was all facile enough; but the idea was not, simply, "Let's party."

What was most distinctive about late-'60s popular music, though, was not that some of its performers used drugs, or that some of its songs were about drugs. It was that late-'60s rock was music designed for people to listen to while they were *on* drugs. The music was a prepackaged sensory stimulant. This was a new development. Jazz musicians might sometimes be junkies, but jazz was not music played for junkies. A lot of late-'60s rock music, though, plainly advertised itself as a kind of complementary good for recreational drugs. This explains many things about the character of popular music in the period—particularly the unusual length of the songs. There is really only one excuse for buying a record with a twelve-minute drum solo.

How the history of popular music reflects the social history of drug preference is a research topic that calls for some fairly daunting field work. It was clear enough in the late '60s, though, that the most popular music was music that projected a druggy aura of one fairly specific kind or another. Folk rock, for example, became either seri-

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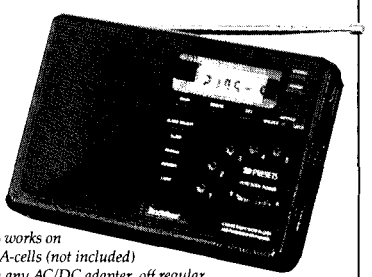

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ously mellow (Donovan, or The Youngbloods) or raucous and giggly (Country Joe and the Fish), sounds suggesting that marijuana might provide a useful enhancement of the listening experience. Music featuring pyrotechnical instrumentalists (Cream, or Ten Years After) had an overdriven, methedrine sort of sound. In the '70s a lot of successful popular music was designed to go well with cocaine, a taste shift many of the '60s groups couldn't adjust to quickly enough. (The Rolling Stones were an exception.)

But the featured drugs of the late '60s were the psychedelics: psilocybin, mescaline, and, especially, LSD. They were associated with the British scene through Lennon, who even before *Sgt. Pepper's* had apparently developed a kind of religious attachment to acid. And LSD was the drug most closely identified with the San Francisco scene, especially with The Grateful Dead, a group that had been on hand in 1965 when Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters took their "acid test" bus trips, and whose equipment had been paid for by Timothy Leary himself. It would seem that once a person was on a hallucinogen, the particular kind of music he was listening to would be largely irrelevant; but there were bands, like The Dead, whose drug aura was identifiably psychedelic.

You didn't have to be on drugs to enjoy late-'60s rock 'n' roll, as many people have survived to attest; and this is an important fact. For from a mainstream point of view, the music's drug aura was simply one aspect of the psychedelic fashion that between 1967 and 1969 swept through popular art (black-light posters), photography (fish-eye lenses), cinema (jump cuts and light shows), clothing (tie-dye), coloring (Day-Glo), and speech ("you turn me on").

Psychedelia expressed the counterculture sensibility in its most pop form. It said: spiritual risk-taker, uninhibited, enemy of the System. It advertised liberation and hipness in the jargon and imagery of the drug experience. And the jargon wasn't restricted to people under 30, or to dropouts. For in the late '60s the drug experience became the universal metaphor for the good life. Commercials for honey encouraged you to "get high with honey." The Ford Motor Company invited you to test drive a Ford and "blow your mind." For people who did not use drugs, the music was a plausible imitation drug experience because every commodity in the culture was pretending to be some kind of imitation drug experience.

Psychedelia, and the sensibility that attached to it, was a media-driven phenomenon. In April 1966 *Time* ran a story on the Carnaby Street, mods and rockers, Beatles and Rolling Stones scene in London. In fact, that scene was on its last legs when the article appeared; but many Americans were induced to vacation in London, which revived the local economy, and the summer of 1966 became the summer of "Swinging London."

Swinging London was perfect mass media material: sexy, upbeat, and fantastically photogenic. So when 20,000 people staged a "Human Be-In" in Golden Gate Park in January 1967, the media were on hand. Here was a domestic version of the British phenomenon: hippies, Diggers, Hell's Angels, music, "free love," and LSD—the stuff of a hundred feature stories and photo essays. The media discovery of the hippies led to the media discovery of the Haight-Ashbury, and the summer of 1967 became the San Francisco "Summer of Love," that year's edition of Swinging London. *Sgt. Pepper's* was released in June, and the reign of psychedelia was established. The whole episode lasted a little less than three years—about the tenure of the average successful television series.

Once the media discovered it, the counterculture ceased being a youth culture and became a commercial culture for which youth was a principal market—at which point its puritanism (inhibitions are oppressive) became for many people an excuse for libertinism (inhibitions are a drag). LSD, for instance, was peddled by Leary through magazines like *Playboy*, where, in a 1966 interview, he explained that "in a carefully prepared, loving LSD session, a woman will inevitably have several hundred orgasms." This was exactly the sort of news *Playboy* existed to print, and the interviewer followed up by asking whether this meant that Leary found himself suddenly irresistible to women. Leary allowed that it did, but proved reluctant to give all the credit to a drug, merely noting that: "Any charismatic person who is conscious of his own mythic potency awakens this basic hunger in women and pays reverence to it at the level that is harmonious and appropriate at the time."

Playboy is not a magazine for dropouts; and the idea that counterculture drugs were really aphrodisiacs was an idea that appealed not to teenagers (who do not require hormonal assistance) but to middle-aged men. ("Good sex would have to be awfully good before it was better than on pot," Norman Mailer mused, presumably for the benefit of his fellow 45-year-olds, in *The Armies of the Night*, in 1968.) It was not teenagers who put Tom Wolfe's account of Kesey's LSD quackery, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (1968), on the hardcover bestseller list. Hippies did not buy tickets to see *Hair* on Broadway, where it opened in 1968 and played over 1,700 performances, or read Charles Reich's homage to bell-bottom pants in *The New Yorker*. People living on communes did not make "Laugh-In," Hollywood's version of the swinging psychedelic style, the highest-rated show on television in the 1968-69 season. And, of course, students did not design, manufacture, distribute, and enjoy the profits from rock 'n' roll records. Those who attack the counterculture for disrupting what they take to have been the traditional American way of life ought to look to the people who exploited and disseminated it—good capitalists all—before they look to the young people who were encouraged to consume it.

IV.

After the Altamont concert disaster in December 1969, when a fan was killed a few feet from the stage where The Rolling Stones were performing, psychedelia lost its middle-class appeal. More unpleasant news followed in 1970—the Kent State and Jackson State shootings, the Manson Family trials, the deaths by overdose of famous rock stars. And even more quickly than it had sprung up, the media fascination with the counterculture evaporated.

But the counterculture, stripped of its idealism and its sexiness, lingered on. If you drove down the main street of any small city in America in the 1970s, you saw clusters of teenagers standing around, wearing long hair and bell-bottom jeans, listening to Led Zeppelin, furtively getting stoned. This was the massive middle of the baby-boom generation, the remnant of the counterculture—a remnant that was much bigger than the original, but in which the media had lost interest. These people were not activists or dropouts. They had very few public voices. One of them was Hunter Thompson's.

Thompson came to *Rolling Stone* in 1970, an important moment in the magazine's history. Wenner had fired Greil Marcus, a music critic with an American studies degree who was then his reviews editor, for running a negative review of an inferior Dylan album called *Self-Portrait* (it is one of Wenner's rules that the big stars must always be hyped); and most of the politically minded members of the staff quit after the "Get Back" episode following Kent State. There were

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financial problems as well. By the end of 1970, *Rolling Stone* was a quarter million dollars in debt.

Hugh Hefner, who is to testosterone what Wenner is to rock 'n' roll, offered to buy the magazine, but Wenner found other angels. Among them were record companies. Columbia Records and Elektra were delighted to advance their friends at *Rolling Stone* a year's worth of advertising; *Rolling Stone* and the record companies, after all, were in the same business.

The next problem was to sell magazines. (*Rolling Stone* relies heavily on newsstand sales, since its readers are not the sort of people who can be counted on to fill out subscription renewal forms with any degree of regularity.) Here Wenner had two strokes of good fortune. The first was a long interview he obtained with John Lennon, the first time most people had ever heard a Beatle not caring to sound lovable. It sold many magazines. The second was the arrival of Thompson.

Thompson was a well-traveled, free-spirited hack whose résumé included a stint as sports editor of *The Jersey Shore Herald*, a job as general reporter for *The Middletown Daily News*, freelance work out of Puerto Rico for a bowling magazine, a period as South American correspondent for *The National Observer* (during which he suffered some permanent hair loss from stress and drugs), an assignment covering the 1968 presidential campaign for *Pageant*, two unpublished Great American novels, a little male modeling, and a narrowly unsuccessful campaign for sheriff of Aspen, Colorado.

Thompson had actually been discovered for the alternative press by Warren Hinckle, the editor of *Ramparts*, which is when his writing acquired the label "gonzo journalism." But Thompson was interested in *Rolling Stone* because he thought it would help his nascent political career by giving him access to people who had no interest in politics (a good indication of the magazine's political reputation in 1970). A year after signing on, he produced the articles that became *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972), a tour de force of pop faction about five days on drugs in Las Vegas. It sold many copies of *Rolling Stone*, and it gave Thompson fortune, celebrity, and a permanent running headline.

Many people who were not young read *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and thought it a witty piece of writing. Wolfe included two selections from Thompson's work in his 1973 anthology *The New Journalism* (everyone else but Wolfe got only one entry); and this has given Thompson the standing of a man identified with an academically recognized Literary Movement. But Thompson is essentially a writer for teenage boys. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* is *The Catcher in the Rye* on speed: the lost weekend of a disaffected loser who tells his story in a mordant style that is addictively appealing to adolescents with a deep and unspecified grudge against life.

Once you understand the target, the thematics make sense. Sexual prowess is part of the Thompson mystique, for example, but the world of his writing is almost entirely male, and sex itself is rarely more than a vague, adult horror; for sex beyond mere bravado is a subject that makes most teenage boys nervous. A vast supply of drugs of every genre and description accompany the Thompson persona and maintain him in a permanent state of dementia; but the drugs have all the verisimilitude of a 14-year-old's secret spy kit: these grown-ups don't realize that the person they are talking to is *completely out of his mind* on dangerous chemicals. The fear and loathing in Thompson's writing is simply Holden Caulfield's fear of growing up—a fear that, in Thompson's case as in Salinger's, is particularly convincing to younger readers because it so clearly runs from the books straight back to the writer himself.

After the Las Vegas book, *Rolling Stone* assigned Thompson to cover the 1972 presidential campaign. His reports were collected in (inevitably) *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail* (1973). The series begins with some astute analysis of primary strategy and the like, salted with irreverent descriptions of the candidates and many personal anecdotes. Thompson's unusual relation to the facts—one piece, which caused a brief stir, reported that Edmund Muskie was addicted to an obscure African drug called Ibogaine—made him the object of some media attention of his own. But eventually the reporting breaks down, and Thompson is reduced at the end of his book to quoting at length from the dispatches of his *Rolling Stone* colleague Timothy Crouse (whose own book about the campaign, *The Boys on the Bus*, became an acclaimed exposé of political journalism).

Since 1972 Thompson has devoted his career to the maintenance of his legend, and his reporting has mostly been reporting about the Thompson style of reporting, which consists largely of unsuccessful attempts to cover his subjects, and of drug misadventures. He doesn't need to report, of course, because reporting is not what his audience cares about. They care about the escapades of their hero, which are recounted obsessively in his writing, and some of which were the basis for an unwatchable movie called *Where the Buffalo Roam*, released in 1980 and starring Bill Murray.

Thompson left *Rolling Stone* around 1975 and eventually became a columnist for the *San Francisco Examiner*. He has been repackaging his pieces in chronicle form regularly since 1979. *Songs of the Doomed* is the third collection, and most of the recent material concerns the author's arrest earlier this year on drug possession and sexual assault charges in Colorado. Having made a fortune portraying himself as a champion consumer of controlled substances, Thompson naturally took the position that the drugs found in his house must have been left there by someone else. (The charges, unfortunately for a writer badly in need of fresh adventures, were dismissed.)

Thompson, in short, is practically the only person in America still living circa 1972. His persona enacts a counterculture sensibility with the utopianism completely leached out. There are no romantic notions about peace and love in his writing, only adolescent paranoia and violence. There is no romanticization of the street, either. Everything disappoints him—an occasionally engaging attitude that is also, of course, romanticism of the very purest sort. Thompson is the eternally bitter elegist of a moment that never really was, and that is why he is the ideal writer for a generation that has always felt that it arrived onstage about five minutes after the audience walked out.

V.

If all popular culture episodes were only commercial and manipulative, they would not matter to us. Some things are what you make them, and even the shabbiest cultures contribute to character. If you grew up in Disneyland, you would care about Mickey Mouse in spite of his artificiality, for Mickey would have been one of the presences in the world where your spirit was formed. Something like this is true for people who grew up in the '60s. For the late-'60s counterculture was not, by any means, the shabbiest episode of the postwar era, even if it now seems the most antique. It was imaginative and infectious, and it touched a nerve.

The faith in popular music, in consciousness-expansion, and in the nonconformist lifestyle that made up the countercultural ethos seems clearly misplaced today. You wonder why it didn't dawn on all those disaffected *Rolling Stone* writers and editors that Wenner was successful precisely because he wasn't

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the anomaly they took him for. But faith in anything can be a valuable sentiment; and what young people in the '60s thought their faith made it possible for them to do was to tell the truth. Of course, telling the truth is much harder than they thought it was; and the culture they imagined was sustaining them turned out not to be "authentically" theirs, and not really sustainable, after all. But those people had not yet become cynics.

The silliest charge brought against the '60s is the charge of moral relativism. Ordinary life must be built on the solid foundations of moral values, those who make this charge argue, and the '60s persuaded people that the foundations weren't solid, and that any morality would do that got you through the night. The accusation isn't just wrong about the '60s; it's an injustice to the dignity of ordinary life, which is an irredeemably pragmatic and open-ended affair. You couldn't make it through even the day if you held every transaction up to scrutiny by the lights of some received moral code. Radicals and youthful counterculture types in the '60s weren't moral relativists. They were moral absolutists. They scrutinized everything, and they believed that they could live by the distinctions they made.

There are always people who think this way—people who see that the world is a little fuzzy and proceed to make a religion out of clarity. In the '60s their way of thinking was briefly but memorably a part of the popular culture. Hotchner's book on The Rolling Stones is a mélange of clichés and misinformation; but it is constructed around a series of interviews with people who were around the band in the '60s, and although most of the anecdotes have the polished and improved feel of tales many times retold, a few have a kind of parabolic resonance.

One of the stories is told by a photographer named Gered Mankowitz, who accompanied The Rolling Stones on their American tours in the 1960s. It seems that there were two groupies in those days who dedicated themselves to the conquest of Mick Jagger. After several years of futile pursuit, they managed to get themselves invited to a house where The Stones were staying, and Mick was persuaded to take both of them to bed. Afterward, though, the girls were disappointed. "He was only so-so," one of them complained. "He tried to come on like Mick Jagger, but he's no Mick Jagger." The real can always be separated from the contrived: wherever that illusion persists, the spirit of the '60s still survives. ●

The Stimsonian Institution

By Ronald Steel

The Colonel: The Life and Wars of Henry Stimson, 1867-1950 by Godfrey Hodgson

(Knopf, 402 pp., $24.95)

Every nation salutes the equestrian statues it needs. The French, preferring to believe the myth that the whole nation bravely resisted Hitler, are now fervently celebrating the centenary of General de Gaulle and declaring that they have always been Gaullists. Here we worship at the shrine of John F. Kennedy, more for who he was and what he might have done than for what he did. And the so-called "establishment," to justify its natural right to rule, has rediscovered Henry Stimson.

Something less than a household word, the austere Stimson was at the center and in the suburbs of American foreign policy-making for half a century: secretary of state, twice secretary of war, presidential adviser, colonial administrator, and all-purpose éminence grise. He was the ultimate stiff-upper-lip establishmentarian, commuting between his Wall Street law practice and the White House, dispensing advice, forging international agreements, reminding Americans of their world responsibilities. A typical Victorian in his preoccupation with duty, service, morality, struggle, and self-improvement, he served as a model for three generations of aspiring gentlemen-strategists. Among those who seek to instruct their fellow citizens in just causes requiring noble sacrifices of their wealth, and sometimes of their person, Stimson is the ultimate inspiring example. George Bush, it is said, considers himself to be a Stimsonian.

What does that mean? A Stimsonian is first of all an insider, and quite likely from within what we call, for lack of a better word, the establishment. He (almost invariably a he) is someone trained in certain values: centrist politics, internationalism, government by an enlightened policy elite, unstinting force in the service of just causes, noblesse oblige. He went, at least in Stimson's day, to a proper college, preferably Yale, and then to Harvard Law School. He practiced law, usually on Wall Street, occasionally ran for public office (although usually without success), and was appointed to a succession of ever higher government jobs. Such a person normally eschews too close an affiliation with either political party, thereby increasing the number of presidential posts for which he is eligible. He will show unstinting firmness in confronting unreasonable resistance to his just demands, but in victory will not hold a grudge. He will be, in short, a gentleman.

There is also a Stimson style. Like the Colonel himself (the title by which he always preferred to be known), a Stimsonian will try hard to be one of the boys. He will go off into the hinterlands to test his mettle. The Colonel climbed mountains and shot bears in the Wild West; his counterpart today might take an Outward Bound course. He will prove himself worthy of his pioneer heritage. The Colonel rode horses until he was too old to mount; today's junior Stimsonian would no doubt jog compulsively and race speedboats. He would marry a well-bred lady and, if possible, have a judicious number of children. He would live in considerable, if somewhat dowdy, comfort, but never ostentatiously. And he would consider government to be rather like a club, where like-minded fellows gathered together to do good and necessary work.

Godfrey Hodgson, a British journalist with a sophisticated understanding of our national customs, tells the Stimson story through the lenses of what he terms the American establishment. Being British, he puts great importance on the issue of social class—far more than would most Americans, who imagine that because we don't talk much about class it doesn't exist. Hodgson argues that Stimson, like his youthful heroes Theodore Roosevelt and Elihu Root, brought certain values and traditions to the goals and implementation of American foreign policy. The establishment, he maintains, is defined less by class and money than by "a history, a policy, an aspiration, an instinct, and a technique."

The history is grounded in two traditions: a nationalism (with imperialist overtones) exemplified by Theodore

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Roosevelt and an internationalism manifest in the idealism of Woodrow Wilson. These two traditions sometimes conflicted with one another, but they were not mutually exclusive. In many ways, indeed, they overlapped. Roosevelt, for all his chest-thumping nationalism, was sophisticated in his international dealings as president; Wilson the idealistic internationalist was often parochial in his domestic policy. Stimson, as secretary of war under Taft, and years later as secretary of state under Hoover, strived to extend the nation's international involvements. The triumph of the internationalist school was not complete until the Second World War, with the dawning of the American Century and the routing of the old isolationists. Stimson, who had begun his government career in 1911 overseeing, among his other duties as secretary of war, the new American colonial empire in Panama and the Philippines, ended it in 1945 with virtually the entire world in thrall to American wealth and power.

It was natural for ambitious young Americans in the early postwar period to emulate Stimson, for in effect that meant joining the board of directors of those who, in the words of John F. Kennedy's troubadour Theodore Sorensen, by right and by might had come to assume the "moral leadership of the world." Like their model, they believed their goals to be good for all, and not necessarily to be confounded by the cacophonous voices of Congress or public opinion. The cold war, which elevated the White House and the national security bureaucracy over the legislature, immensely aided the ability of this elite to operate without restraint on the fringes of power. Stimson, too, in an age before the mass media and an imperial presidency, exemplified government by elite. In this way he serves, as Hodgson observes, as "the link that connects the foreign policy of late nineteenth-century American imperialism to the foreign policy of the Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy eras; the link between Theodore Roosevelt and Dean Acheson."

Stimson's successors, like their model, considered themselves to be liberal internationalists. For them this meant, as Hodgson writes, "a tendency to advocate restraint, to shrink from crude militarism or overbearing chauvinism, to show sensitivity to the still voice of conscience," while still feeling free to use military force in a good cause. It no more inhibited his successors from devastating Vietnam and Cambodia than it did Stimson himself from using atom bombs twice against Japanese civilians and, in an example of what would seem to be the unreflective racism of his time and social class, from putting 100,000 Americans of Japanese descent into concentration camps for no better reason than that, as he wrote at the time in his diary, "their racial characteristics are such that we cannot understand or trust even citizen Japanese." What seemed like enlightened internationalism to self-styled Stimsonians seemed to many on the receiving end less inspiring. From their vantage point, as Hodgson notes, "liberal internationalism was liberal imperialism without the brass bands."

According to its practitioners, the Stimson tradition was not one of naked power wielded to intimidate the weak, but of corrective power to tame the belligerent. It was redemptive rather than coercive, and it could not, by definition, be aggressive. Its exercise rested on an assumption of self-assurance and inherent legitimacy, principal attributes of any elite. Its declared goal was internationalism, and its preferred method "collective security," which it generally interpreted as allied acquiescence to American leadership. In this it differed conceptually from the radical right that came to power with Reagan. These "new conservatives" were, in effect, mutants descended from the old isolationists, intent on protecting America from foreign Lilliputians who would tie it up in knots, and from East Coast internationalists with their suspicious foreign mannerisms.

If Stimson is the patron saint of the American foreign policy establishment, this is not simply because he avowed internationalism. Many others did, too. It is because he spoke of moral responsibility as well as of power and was not afraid to re-examine his assumptions. He also exercised power with a considerable degree of modesty, a commodity not in great supply in Washington. He understood a cardinal rule of the bureaucracy: that one can often get what one wants if one does not insist on personal credit for it. Although a militant nationalist steeped in an imperial tradition, he believed in the essential dignity and legitimacy, if not necessarily the equality, of the colonial peoples whose affairs he administered. He was an aristocrat and a reformist, a conservative and a trustbuster, a man of principle who avoided the sin of self-righteousness.

In Stimson's long career Hodgson finds a vehicle for examining America's coming of age as the world's dominant power, and the role that a social elite has played in defining and orchestrating that power. This leads him to put considerable emphasis on the rites-of-passage approach: the Wild West as a psychic substitute for empire, the envy of young men who did not fight in a great war for those who did, the cult of virility among those denied the ordeal of battle, the notion of a successor generation (or nation) played out on a global scale, the transfer of the boarding school code of ethics and valor to the diplomacy board, the underlying assumptions of race and class superiority.

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The need of the elite to test itself against challenge and to prove itself worthy, he suggests, is why Stimson and his hero Roosevelt spent so much time in the West, camping with Indians and shooting animals. "The idea of a struggle for prizes, so to speak, has always been one of the fundamental elements of my mind," he quotes Stimson in a revealing confession. Is this a phenomenon of class, as Hodgson suggests, or is it a notion rooted deep in the American psyche? It is not only Eastern preppy-warriors, after all, who feel the need to demonstrate their virility. One of the most psychologically revealing moments in the Vietnam War came when Defense Secretary Robert McNamara shook his fists at jeering students in Harvard Yard and proclaimed that he was tougher than all of them.

Although this is an immensely readable and instructive book, written with considerable wisdom and flair, it is still difficult at the end to be certain why Stimson was so venerated. Perhaps, as in the case of George Marshall, one would have had to have known him to understand. A mere recital of his life provides no answer. He was, it would seem, a not atypical young man on the make, attaching himself to influential older men, particularly to Root—senator, secretary of state, and secretary of war—and to Roosevelt, fellow mountain climber, big game hunter, progressive, and overcompensator.

It was Roosevelt who, in 1906, gave young Stimson, then a junior partner in Root's Wall Street law firm, his first appointive job: the important post of U.S. Attorney for the southern district of New York. Four years later Stimson ran for governor of New York but was defeated. In 1911 President Taft appointed him secretary of war, a job that at that time meant he was in charge of America's newly acquired colonies in Panama, the Caribbean, and the Philippines. In the late 1920s he became a full-time colonial administrator, first as Coolidge's special negotiator in war-torn Nicaragua, then as governor-general of the Philippines—a post previously held by his esteemed friend, the notorious man-on-horseback, General Leonard Wood.

After relatively brief service in Manila, Hoover brought Stimson back to become secretary of state in 1928. In that post he preached liberal internationalism and European debt forgiveness to a nation uninterested in either, sought to alleviate the desperate economic condition of Weimar Germany, and with regard to militaristic Japan proposed the doctrine that bears his name. The Stimson Doctrine, better known for its intentions than its results, sought to rally the democracies against Japan's 1931 invasion of Manchuria. But few nations cared enough to antagonize the Japanese, and Stimson's persuasiveness was further hampered by the fact that the United States was not even a member of the League of Nations. His effort at collective security fell mostly on deaf ears.

With the accession to power in 1933 of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Democrats, the Republican Stimson returned to his Wall Street law practice. But in June 1940, as Hitler's armies swept across France and the Lowlands, FDR reached for a government of national unity by appointing the 72-year-old Stimson as secretary of war, the same post he had held under Taft twenty-nine years earlier. Stimson was an inspired—and a logical—choice. He had defied the isolationists in his own party by urging rearmament and all-out aid to Britain.

When Stimson took charge of America's defenses, the country was merely one of the world's major powers. It produced only one-fourth as many arms in 1940 as Nazi Germany and one-fifth as many planes as Russia. Its 174,000-man army was smaller than that of Portugal but larger than that of Bulgaria. Five years later, when the war ended, the United States marshaled the greatest military force the world had ever known. Part of that strength lay in the newly discovered and only dimly comprehended power of the atom. It is the story of the atom bomb that gives Stimson relevance for our time, and his approach to it that has raised him from the anonymous legions of Wall Street lawyers who have held high positions in government.

Stimson is best remembered today as the man who bore both a major responsibility for building the atom bomb and ordering its use against Japan, and who realized the revolutionary nature of the weapon and tried to bring it under international control. Hodgson devotes the last third of his book to exploring the two issues in which Stimson was so intimately involved: how the bomb was used in war, and how it might be controlled in peace. Stimson had no more moral qualms about using the bomb against Japan than he did about shooting bears. His job, as he saw it, was to end the war as quickly as possible and to avoid the invasion of the home islands he believed would otherwise be necessary.

Terror-bombing against civilians was not new, after all, as the fiery ruins of Dresden and Tokyo made clear. It was not surprising that most strategists viewed the bomb as just another weapon, but with greater psychological impact. The bomb did not make war more inhuman, only more destructive. Except among a few scientists, the morality of using the bomb was not even a question. It was "our least abhorrent choice," Stimson later explained. "It stopped the fire raids and the strangling blockade; it ended the ghastly specter of a clash of great land armies."

It was not until the surrender of Japan that Stimson focused on the political consequences of the bomb. Truman, who did not even know about the bomb project until he was informed by Stimson on Roosevelt's death in April, faced two postwar decisions: Should the bomb affect relations toward the Russians, and should any single nation be allowed even a temporary monopoly? Even as early as the Potsdam Conference of August 1945, the wartime alliance with Moscow was beginning to break down. Some policymakers, particularly the new secretary of state, James Byrnes, saw the bomb as a potential instrument to exert political pressure on the Russians. Stimson, although a conservative Republican deeply antipathetic to communism, argued fervently against such an approach. American relations with the Kremlin would be "irretrievably embittered," he told Truman, if we continued to negotiate "having this weapon rather ostentatiously on our hip."

This belief, gleaned from five decades of political negotiating, led him to his second position: that the only way to avoid a disastrous arms race was to bring the Russians into an international system to control the atom. America's development of the bomb, he told the president, "has placed a moral responsibility on us which we cannot shirk." But the tired, 78-year-old Stimson could only raise the question, not resolve it. When he retired from office in September 1945, the issue was still in the balance and Russia was still officially considered to be an ally. Within a few months, however, the spirit of cooperation and trust that he had urged was fast giving way to the fears and the fevers of the cold war.

Stimson, born only two years after the last battles of the Civil War, a man who had camped with Indians in the Western wilds, thrilled at Admiral Dewey's capture of the Philippines, and volunteered for service in World War I at the age of 50, was the first American statesman with the vision to face seriously the revolutionary implications of the atomic age. This required a subtlety of mind, a depth of understanding, a willingness to break loose from conventional thinking, and an inherent decency that is all the more honored for being so rare.

Considering the paucity of heroic fig-

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ures in our public life, it is not surprising that Stimson has been hoisted on a pedestal as an object of veneration. But like most dead heroes, he sometimes seems to be cast in bronze. Hodgson has done an admirable job of putting the public man into focus, yet he offers no particular illumination of Stimson's personality, nor any satisfying explanation of what it was about his character that led him to behave at critical moments as he did. A few stabs at psychobiography, added almost parenthetically at the end of the book, merely ask rather than answer questions. On the public man, though, Hodgson's treatment is thorough, judicious, and unfailingly interesting. (The stingy index limited mostly to proper names, the total absence of a bibliography, and the sketchy and difficult-to-read footnotes are unnecessary failings in a book of such distinction.)

The Stimson tradition of power tempered by principle lives on in aspiration, if not always in deed. The problem is to get the mixture right. The secret of Stimsonism is proportion. If policy-makers during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 did in fact, as we are told, ask themselves, "What would Colonel Stimson have done?," it was because they believed that he would have combined strength with restraint. It was not the Stimson style to "kick a little ass" to show that he was a tough dude. Stimson's hallmark was authenticity. He knew who he was, he separated his political beliefs from his emotional needs, and he displayed a redeeming sense of proportion because he had an inner self-assurance. In response to Japan's aggression in 1931 against China, he sought to impose sanctions and to enforce an international policy of non-recognition. He did not send an American army to Manchuria. Stimson is a tempting model to imitate, but he is a hard one, even for a fellow Bonesman with all the proper credentials. There is a difference between the right résumé and the right stuff. ●

The Great Ventriloquist

By Ann Hulbert

Possession
by A. S. Byatt

(Random House, 555 pp., $22.95)

In our era of theory-saturated literary studies, it takes a tenured professor to set a clever novel in the groves of academe. Who else knows the orthodoxies cold, and has the liberty and leisure to have readable fun with them? The key is to be suitably self-conscious about anything so simple as a "story" or a "character," and then proceed to create just that. Handle it right, and you can offer old-fashioned mystery, comedy, and romance tricked out in newfangled, self-reflexive style. You can, as A. S. Byatt does in her tour de force of university fiction, write a book that is packaged like a fat, glossy romance—and win the Booker Prize, too.

The escape from criticism into creative writing, as Byatt tells it, occasions a kind of conversion in one's attitude toward the word. One of her protagonists, Roland Mitchell, a dogged postdoctoral researcher at Prince Albert College, London, describes his heady sense of enlightenment when, toward the end of *Possession*, he suddenly thinks he might be a poet:

> He had been taught that language was essentially inadequate, that it could never speak what was there, that it only spoke itself. . . . What had happened to him was that the way in which it *could* be said had become more interesting than the idea that it could not.

Just how subversive a revelation that can be, challenging the reigning theories of linguistic indeterminacy, Byatt only slowly reveals. Her immediate aim is to make the most of multiple meanings and voices: her novel is the occasion for an exhilarating, virtuosic, and at times exhausting exploration of the many ways language has of speaking. A scholarly authority on George Eliot, the Romantics, and Iris Murdoch, Byatt puts her expertise to energetic use. In *Possession* she becomes a nineteenth-century ventriloquist, and she ingeniously juxtaposes the previous century with the hothouse world of the contemporary academy. The donnish novels of Murdoch (to say nothing of David Lodge, John Fowles, Umberto Eco, and others) have clearly inspired her.

True to the requirements of up-to-date university fiction, *Possession* is full of the fashionable rhetoric of literary theory. Byatt proves herself, as she says of Roland, "trained in the post-structuralist deconstruction of the subject." But it soon becomes clear that her facility with the professional jargon is accompanied by a mounting frustration with it. The two characters in the historical foreground of the novel, Roland and his equally sober literary companion, Maud Bailey of Lincoln University, "know all . . . about how there isn't a unitary ego—how we're made up of conflicting, interacting systems of things. . . . We know we are driven by desire . . ." They often lapse into semiotic chatter, and the talk about textuality and sexuality is almost always an occasion for a satiric dig, not least at their emotionally straitened lives. It is also a prelude to serious doubt for Roland and Maud about the literary orthodoxy they officially endorse.

For as Byatt sends them off on one extraordinary quest—to uncover the secret romance between the famous (married) Victorian poet Randolph Henry Ash and the lesser known (and until now purportedly lesbian, or asexual) poet Christabel LaMotte—she also burdens them with another mission: to confront the glacial anti-romanticism at the heart of their studies and their lives so far. What better way to scrutinize the postmodern, post-Freudian, "knowing" attitude than to compare it with the doubting, inhibited Victorian spirit? Especially since the juxtaposition offers an unexpected twist: lives in the age of sexual ultrasophistication turn out to be frigid, and passion thrives in the age of repression.

In playing out this contrast, Byatt takes a conventional novelistic approach: she interweaves the paths and preoccupations of her two couples. But within that old-fashioned structure, she mixes up styles, genres, voices in good postmodern manner. The tale of her contemporary pair is a detective story, and the mystery at its heart is the tale of her Victorian pair, which is a romance. The thriller is launched when Roland, browsing among his hero Ash's papers in the library, discovers drafts of an urgent personal letter to an unidentified woman. Roland immediately recognizes the note as a possible clue to an unknown side of the fiercely intellectual poet renowned for his calm, exemplary life. In a moment of uncharacteristic impulsiveness, Roland slips the letters into his own Oxford Selected Ash and leaves the library, and the sleuthing begins.

In pursuit of Ash's mysterious correspondent, whom he quickly identifies as

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Christabel LaMotte, Roland is led to Maud Bailey, who is a distant relative of the poetess, an expert on her, and the guardian of some of her unpublished papers. They turn out to have more than a professional subject in common: they are both full of diffidence about personal entanglements. From here on, Roland and Maud's story, as they pursue the Victorian secret, traces the erosion (slowly) of their literary certainties and (even more slowly) of their emotional uncertainties.

The quest for the poets' hidden passion is a formal challenge to the scholars' habits. Roland, a dedicated textual editor of Ash, and Maud, a psychoanalytic critic of LaMotte, are at once queasy and excited about the personal probing they are suddenly drawn into. Byatt captures their ambivalence, and their initially combative relation, in a characteristic bit of well-tuned dialogue, initiated by Roland:

> "I've never been much interested in places—or things—with associations—"
>
> "Nor I. I'm a textual scholar. I rather deplore the modern feminist attitude toward private lives."
>
> "If you're going to be stringently analytical," Roland said, "don't you have to?"
>
> "You can be psychoanalytical without being *personal*" Maud said. Roland did not challenge her.

Inevitably, their pursuit becomes very personal, as they unearth letters that chart the at first hesitant, then increasingly intense conversation between Ash and LaMotte—and that break off at precisely the moment when the young scholars (in spite of their purist approach) are dying to know what happened next. Was the relationship ever consummated, or did Christabel in the end retreat into the quiet house she shared with her spinsterish companion? Roland and Maud set out to trace Randolph Ash's natural history expedition to North Yorkshire in June 1859, hoping to discover, by reading various clues in a new light, whether Christabel accompanied him.

Just because Roland and Maud depart from their strictly textual methods doesn't mean that Byatt endorses old-fashioned biographical hounding, or the newer feminist variation on it. She may be skeptical of high-flown theory, but she's also dubious about more reductive approaches. As she follows Roland and Maud in their tramp through Yorkshire on the trail of the poets, she interweaves her most merciless satire of two of the cruder varieties of literary analysis. Her targets are Americans, Professor Mortimer Cropper, keeper of the most complete collection of Ash relics at Robert Dale Owen University in New Mexico, editor of Ash's correspondence, and author of *The Great Ventriloquist*, a pompous biography of Ash; and Professor Leonora Stern, from Tallahassee, author of *Motif and Matrix in the Poems of LaMotte*, a study in which discussions of creativity inevitably return to discussions of female sexuality.

Roland and Maud dip into those tomes on their trip, and so do we, thanks to Byatt's skillful parody of several pages of each. Writing of LaMotte's long poem *The Fairy Mélusine*, for example, Leonora Stern discourses on feminine landscapes as erotic terrain and emphasizes the relation between watery scenes and orgasmic pleasures:

> The male fountain spurts and springs. Mélusine's fountain has a *female* wetness, trickling out from its pool rather than rising confidently, thus mirroring those female secretions which are not inscribed in our daily use of language (*langue*, tongue)—the sputum, mucus, milk, and bodily fluids of women who are silent for dryness.

By now prepared to be impatient with their colleagues, Roland and Maud see that they completely miss the point. Stern digresses about LaMotte and autoeroticism, and Cropper speculates about the fear of sterility and decline lurking behind Ash's new interest in nature's procreative powers, but the younger scholars are onto the truth, which is precisely the opposite: the Yorkshire journey was the occasion of an all-consuming affair between Ash and LaMotte, and their poems can't look the same once that secret has been glimpsed.

Byatt's aim is to show that Maud and Roland are guided to their discovery by a much more imaginative sense of what words can mean than either of the Americans begins to grasp. The key to the young scholars' sympathetic comprehension of the poets is the opposite of sophistication. "Something primitive," they acknowledge, seizes them in their reading: "narrative curiosity." And something else, equally primitive, overtakes them at the same time: stirrings of their own desire—this from a pair who agree that their ideal is "a clean empty bed in a clean empty room, where nothing is asked or to be asked.... Maybe we're symptomatic of whole flocks of exhausted scholars and theorists." Though still studiously avoiding any admission of their growing interest in each other, they pore over the works of their heroes with new energy and vision.

Here Byatt agilely plays off the divergences and convergences between the circumstances of her two couples. Roland and Maud are inspired by the act of sympathy required to bridge what they see as a huge gap separating them from Ash and LaMotte. "It makes an interesting effort of imagination," Roland puts it in his understated way, "to think how they saw the world"—and saw each other. Byatt invites her readers to join in that effort, plunging us into the same freighted material the professors peruse. She puts all her linguistic, parodic skills on display, almost as if she had set herself the challenge of imitating and interweaving as many Victorian genres as possible: short poems, long poems, personal letters, public letters, stories, journal entries (Ash's and his wife's, as well as those of LaMotte's companion and her niece), and more.

The effect of the sometimes dizzying collage is at first just as Roland says: there's a sense of real distance separating us from them. But before long that comfortably detached vantage is unsettled. Juxtaposing her contemporary style—abrupt swerves between documents and time frames—and the poets'

The Runner and the Mountain

Why he wanted the mountain? What in
The ground failed to support the right airs
Above ground? On he runs, and as he

Runs his footsteps shatter the sand's crust
And remain where they are. Behind him
And before him the laws of form fall,

Fall. The mountain retreats, big and gay
In a remote diction of gesture,
Diction of a space that figures forth

Hyperboles of separation—
The mountain's vehement expression
Of gaps no stride can measure. He reads

This, reads in the didactic air want
Of mountains and runs on, a gnostic
In the ignorant wilderness until

His foot lands square on time, then hovers
Where bare Elements and the singing
Shell of the first prophesy embrace,

Figuring forth possible mountains
Of form. He is taken up, caressed,
Enclosed within the mountain's pleasure.

Vicki Hearne

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old-fashioned style, Byatt unfolds a curiously anachronistic story. The great drama of their lives, as Christabel steps forth from her well-guarded seclusion and Randolph ventures onto uncharted emotional terrain, begins as a Victorian tale told in musty letters but becomes a surprising modern story of liberation followed by abandonment. In the chapter that culminates the poets' affair, Byatt springs free of her documentation and claims imaginative license to follow them on their fateful Yorkshire trip. As she begins, using only "the man" and "the woman," it's momentarily unclear whether the excitedly apprehensive couple on the train are Randolph and Christabel or Maud and Roland.

Several further, suspenseful turns in the detective story reveal that the poets' lives have a ragged modern ending, their paths leading off in different directions and their messages to each other lost in transmission. The young professors, meanwhile, are on their way to an old-fashioned happy ending, two chilly souls warming each other at last. Having quoted Hawthorne in her epigraph ("When a writer calls his work a Romance . . . he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material . . ."), Byatt calls on the conventions of Romance to wind up the many threads of her mystery in a pleasantly implausible way.

But Byatt the literature professor can't resist a last word. Though the lives she has spun out have been fascinating, it's the books that finally count, she instructs near the end: language and imaginative reading shouldn't be eclipsed by biographical sleuthing. As she explains in a Victorian authorial intrusion, it's not easy to prevent words from fading into the background amid the drama of tumultuous lives: "It is possible for a writer to make, or remake at least, for a reader, the primary pleasures of eating, or drinking, or looking on, or sex. . . . [Novels] do not habitually elaborate on the equally intense pleasure of reading." That's because it's a tricky, self-reflexive matter, calling attention to the experience of reading in the course of that experience; it requires rousing "the brain" and "the viscera" so that the pleasure of encountering words on a page isn't merely "papery and dry."

That is the challenge Byatt has immodestly set for herself in her elaborate patchwork of "original" texts. There's a triumphant, sometimes slightly irritating, exhibitionism at the core of that aim, for the many words we're meant to thrill to are, of course, all finally Byatt's own. At the close of the novel, just in case her readers haven't already fully enjoyed such pleasure and watched her characters enjoy it, she gives Roland a classic moment of readerly ecstasy. He goes back to a poem of Ash's with his new knowledge of the poet's passionate life:

> Roland read, or reread, *The Golden Apples*, as though the words were living creatures or stones of fire. . . . He heard Ash's voice, certainly his voice, his own unmistakable voice, and he heard the language moving around, weaving its own patterns, beyond the reach of any single human, writer or reader. . . . He saw too that Christabel was the Muse and Proserpine and that she was not, and this seemed to be so interesting and *apt*, once he had understood, that he laughed aloud.

Byatt assiduously tends to all the "primary pleasures" of description in her novel, entering into her characters' lives and above all their loves. She sees to it that Roland gets his girl in the end, though as he's said earlier, that's "vulgar romance," certainly compared with the Victorians' high passion. But the real feat of her novel is in making it plausible—and important—that those poets wrote poems from their heads and hearts, and that Roland and Maud can now read them more fully than they ever have before. It's the kind of lesson more literature professors could stand to teach. ●

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

adequate, incomplete, and misleading.

PATRICIA WILLIAMS
Durham, North Carolina

The writer is a visiting professor of law at Duke University.

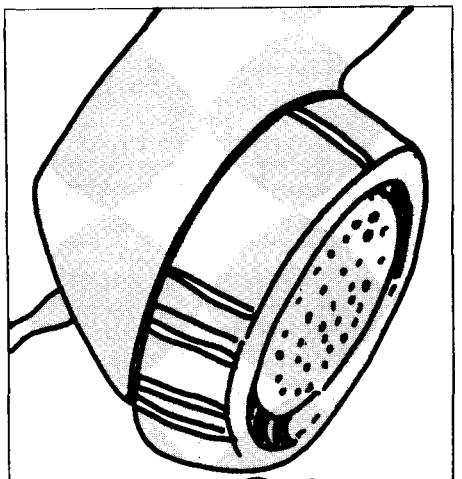
Benign neglect

To the editors:

In "White Mischief" (Notebook, December 10) you stated that the "conservative-dominated Supreme Court upheld" the FCC's preferential giveaways of television licenses. Actually, the conservatives did not. *All* of President Reagan's appointees dissented. In fact, Justice Anthony Kennedy castigated the Court for applying a lower standard of review than it usually does in cases where race is involved.

Former Justice Brennan, the author of the majority opinion and the Court's most liberal member, supported the FCC's license scheme because it involved "benign" discrimination (read: reverse discrimination). Justice Kennedy's response: "I regret that after a century of judicial opinions [since *Plessy* v. *Ferguson*] we interpret the Constitution to do no more than move us from 'separate but equal' to 'unequal but benign.' "

MATTHEW EMMOTT HUGHES
Houston, Texas



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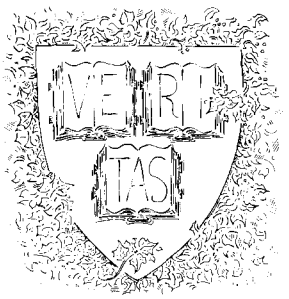
CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Big sister

"WE WENT," WROTE BERTOLT Brecht, "changing our country more often than our shoes . . ." And by "we" he meant those driven out of their native lands by fascism and spurred on to other places by the promise of revolution. It's been half a century since vast numbers of fellow travelers crossed borders to assist in building the future. But if their bodies have stayed put, their pieties have not. First and for the longest time—and despite the great terror—it was the Soviet Union, the mother country and its satellite progeny, that received their worship. Then there was a gradual switch from Eastern Europe toward China. There followed, seriatim, after a few disillusioning African states, Cuba, Algeria, Vietnam, and, in the end, Sandinista Nicaragua, until Nicaraguans got a chance at a free vote and put an end to that one. One might think that such an odyssey would trouble even the most exuberant armchair revolutionaries. Not so, alas. Only faintly discouraged by the fact that there's no regime, no "actually existing socialism," to engage them anymore, they've settled their ardors on two distant movements, the PLO and the ANC—as if the Palestinians and the South Africans didn't have enough troubles of their own. A black South African friend just stayed with us in Cambridge for a few days, and he was struck by how the high-minded locals had, from the safety of Brattle Street, appointed the ANC, and only the ANC, as the rightful heir to his people's future. He was a political prisoner in Robben Island prison during the crucial ten years when all the progressive certainties were crumbling. But he'd seen enough since to know that friends like these were a hex. Those whom the Gods would destroy they first afflict with the piety of Jesse Jackson and Ramsey Clark.

CAMBRIDGE, LIKE BERKELEY AND Madison, is one of those towns with a full-blown foreign policy. One manifestation of this was the decision of the City Council a few years back to attach ourselves as a sister-city to Yerevan, the capital of Soviet Armenia. There has just arrived in the mail an end-of-year fund-raising solicitation for the sister-city program. It urges me not to put this letter on my "recycling pile." (This is Cambridge, after all, and people do not have ordinary wastebaskets, whose contents go straight to the dump.) There's a tone of urgency to the letter: "Now that the Cold War is over, we in Cambridge and Yerevan need to be working together even more. The year ahead promises profound political and economic changes. . . . Yerevan continues to be plagued by pollution." So what can Cambridge offer its Yerevan friends aside from "an inter-continental social calendar that is staggering"? In small print, the letter promises Cambridge's "extensive conflict resolution expertise" to meet "new types of disputes for which the central government in Moscow may no longer be an appropriate vehicle." Maybe Roger Fisher, or a team from the Kennedy School of Government, could be parachuted in. The "new types of disputes," of course, is a polite reference to the bloody conflicts between Armenia and its neighbors. There is also no explicit admission that the central government in Moscow has no moral or political authority left, merely the force of the police and the army—the only force that keeps Armenia a Soviet republic. But pointing that out, I guess, would be unsisterly. For the Cambridge masses, Gorbachev's USSR is still a shibboleth, whatever those who live under its boot may feel.



CAMBRIDGE WILL THIS YEAR BE bringing Yerevan students to our Longy School of Music and also artists and art to an Armenian folk jamboree. And besides shipping all those law professors specializing in conflict resolution, we'll be "networking" with Yerevan on business education and environmentalism. Multiculturalism is something we're not exporting, although it's probably only a matter of time. The other thing Cambridge isn't sending is food. That's smart, because everyone else is. *The Washington Post* reports that India (!) will be lending the Soviets a million tons of wheat and giving 20,000 tons of rice. Tiny Israel—well, not Israel exactly, with which Moscow still doesn't have diplomatic relations, but the Jewish Agency—has sent twenty-five tons of fruit and vegetables, and is planning much more. Some experts say there's no real shortage of anything in the country, that food and medicine are just siphoned off to be sold on the black market. One friend who just returned from Leningrad said he did buy a cucumber. It cost $4. Still, the Soviet ambassador to France put out a list of items he said his country needed to get through the winter. According to *The New York Times*, this included "powdered milk, . . . meat, cooked meats, vegetable oil, butter, candy, cigarettes, flour, noodles, gruel, canned fish, canned vegetables, fruit, dried fruit, washing powder, and toothpaste." Who was it who said he'd seen the future and it works? The Western alliance has gone into high gear to meet what at least Gorbachev himself needs this winter. Let's hope there's no real famine in Africa, because the second most powerful state in the world, still spending vast sums on its military, has appropriated to itself all the available compassion. And in return? There are still some 2,300 Soviet advisers working on oil and military installations in Iraq. No good deed goes unpunished.

READERS MAY REmember I confessed some time ago to having voted in the Massachusetts Democratic gubernatorial primary for John Silber. I liked the fact that he was so impolitic, and I liked some of what he was so impolitically saying. Actually I'd wanted to vote for Bill Weld in the Republican primary, but I'm a registered Democrat and couldn't. Of course, I did vote for Weld in the election, and sent a modest contribution besides. I'm happy it is he who is replacing Mike Dukakis. But the truth is, I'd be happy that anyone was. Readers may also remember an article by Sidney Blumenthal about the Silber-Weld race that appeared one week after my Diarist. It was not exactly friendly to Silber, and he took umbrage. His lawyer demanded that we "RETRACT AND DISAVOW each and every one" of some ten statements, from his firing deans at the University of Texas to his reference to Helen Vendler, Harvard professor and frequent TNR contributor, as "Henry the Eighth with tits." In the last weeks of the campaign he went around saying he was going to sue us for libel. The news went from Maine to California, and wherever I go people now ask me about the Silber suit. Well, it hasn't happened, and it's not because we've retracted anything or apologized at all. My guess is that it's because, in a suit, there are so many counts on which he and his university trustees would be subject to discovery proceedings that only a fool would enter in such a process. Oscar Wilde made that mistake. Come to think of it, so did Alger Hiss. Impolitic John Silber may be, but a fool he is not.

MARTIN PERETZ

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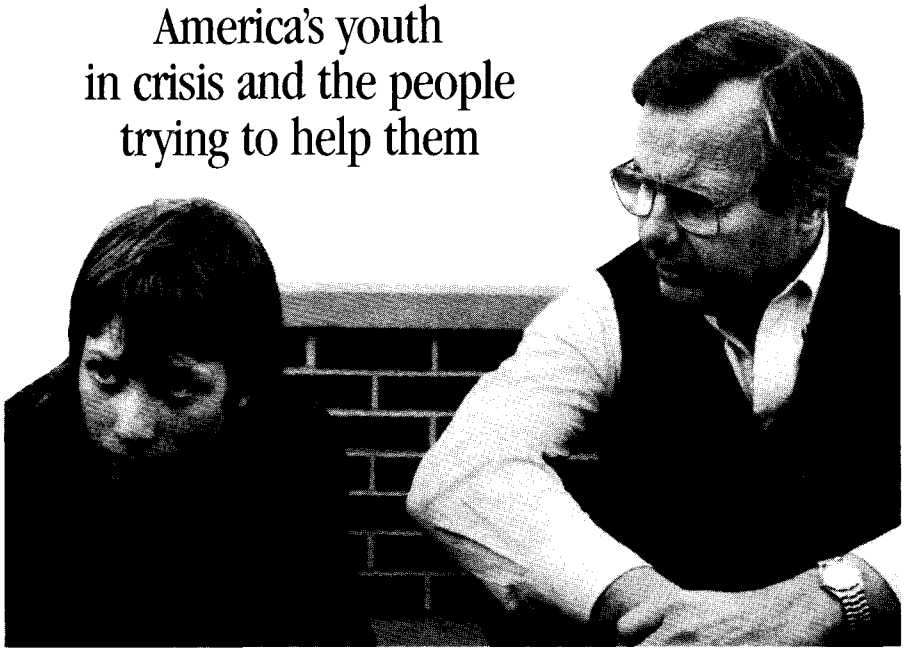
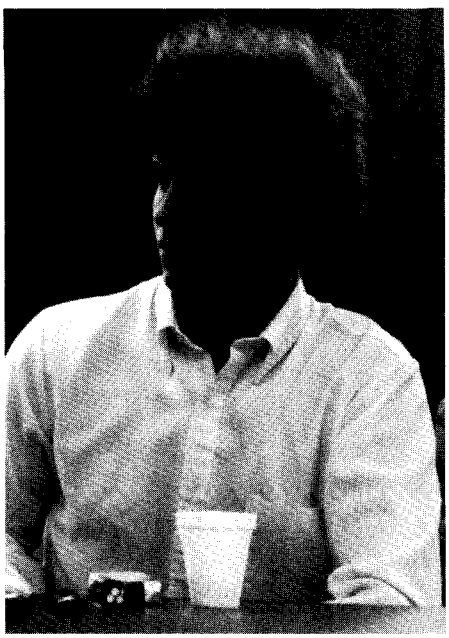
ALL OUR CHILDREN

WITH BILL MOYERS

America's youth
in crisis and the people
trying to help them





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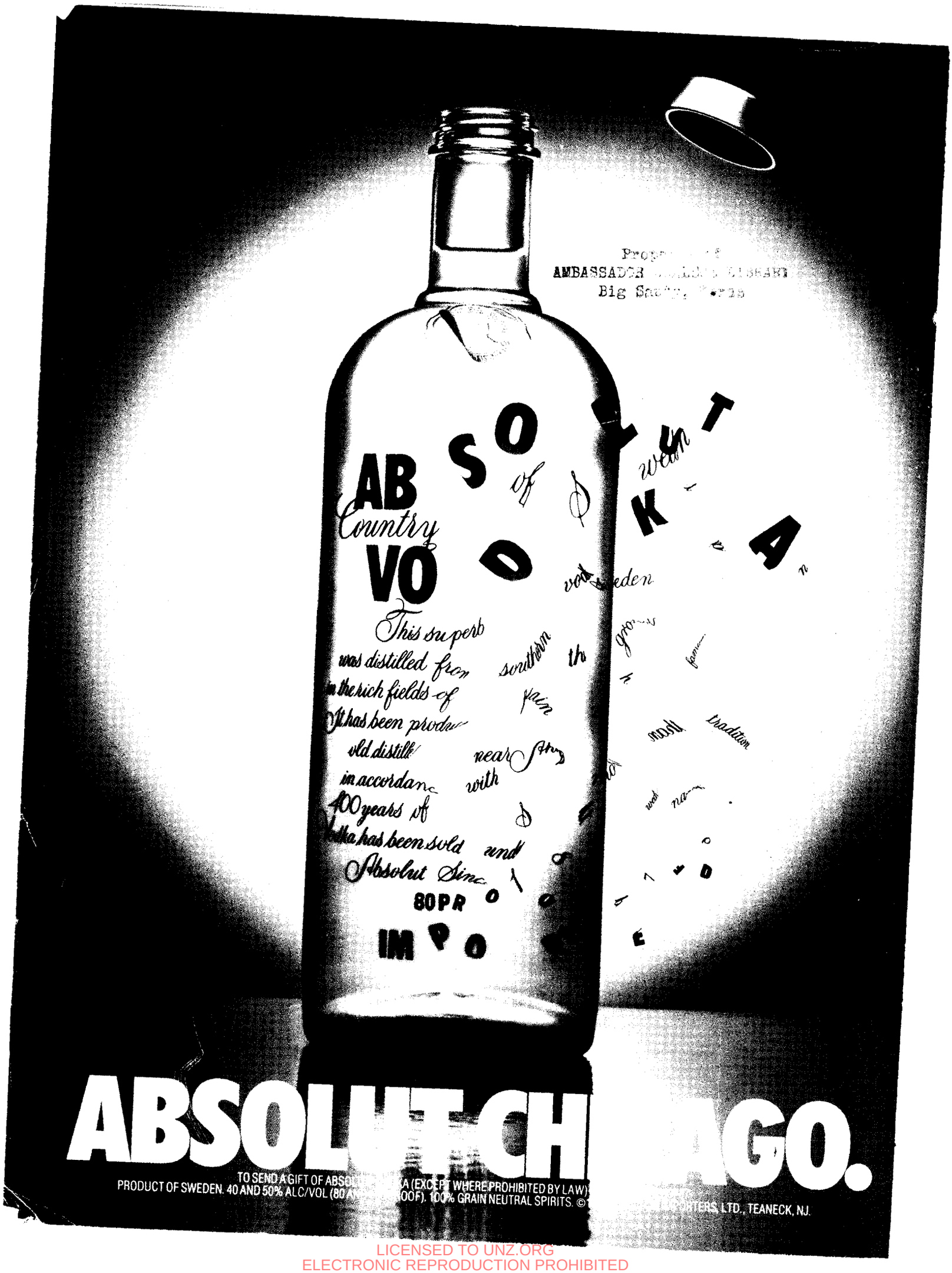

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